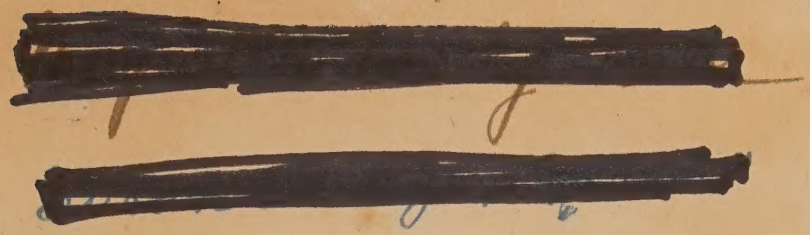
STOKES' WONDER BOOK OF THE BIBLE

BY
HELEN WARD BANKS
ILLUSTRATED BY
FLORENCE CHOATE & ELIZABETH CURTIS



STOKES
WONDER BOOK
OF THE BIBLE

"'SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME: FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD'"

STOKES' WONDER-BOOK OF THE BIBLE

BY

HELEN WARD BANKS

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR
AND FORTY-FOUR IN BLACK-AND-WHITE BY

FLORENCE CHOATE
AND
ELIZABETH CURTIS

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TO

SARAH BANKS

IN MEMORY OF
THE PATIENT SUNDAY AFTERNOONS
OF LONG AGO

PREFACE

FOR these busy days, when Bible story-telling on Sunday afternoons is out of fashion, I have written this story of the Bible in memory of the Sunday afternoons of long ago when, as a very little child, I first made the acquaintance "of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthah: of David also and Samuel and of the prophets," hoping that in so doing I might make these old heroes the familiar friends to the boys and girls of this generation that they were to me.

Although the book is a connected history of the Jews from the creation to the Apocalypse, it is told as biography rather than as history, because I believe that men themselves make a more stirring appeal to the young imagination than do any of the events that men accomplish. I have dropped out of the narrative the details that were not necessary to it and have tried in the rest to keep as close as possible to the dignified style of the Bible, telling the stories, as it does, without apology or explanation. Believing also in the force of direct discourse, I have, whenever I could, used the wonderfully dramatic Bible conversations, taking them word for word from the King James version.

If I have in this story done anything to make the Bible into real history of real men and women; if I have helped to change the patriarchs and kings and prophets from a list of long names into actual pioneers and statesmen and reformers whose influence we still feel; if I have caused modern boys and girls to see the Children of Israel as torch-bearers keeping the spiritual idea alight for us through the dark ages of material idolatry—then I shall feel with true gratitude that my Sunday afternoons of long ago were the seed-time for a later harvest.

HELEN WARD BANKS.

The Burrow,
Westport, Conn.
June 21, 1918.

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The Old Testament

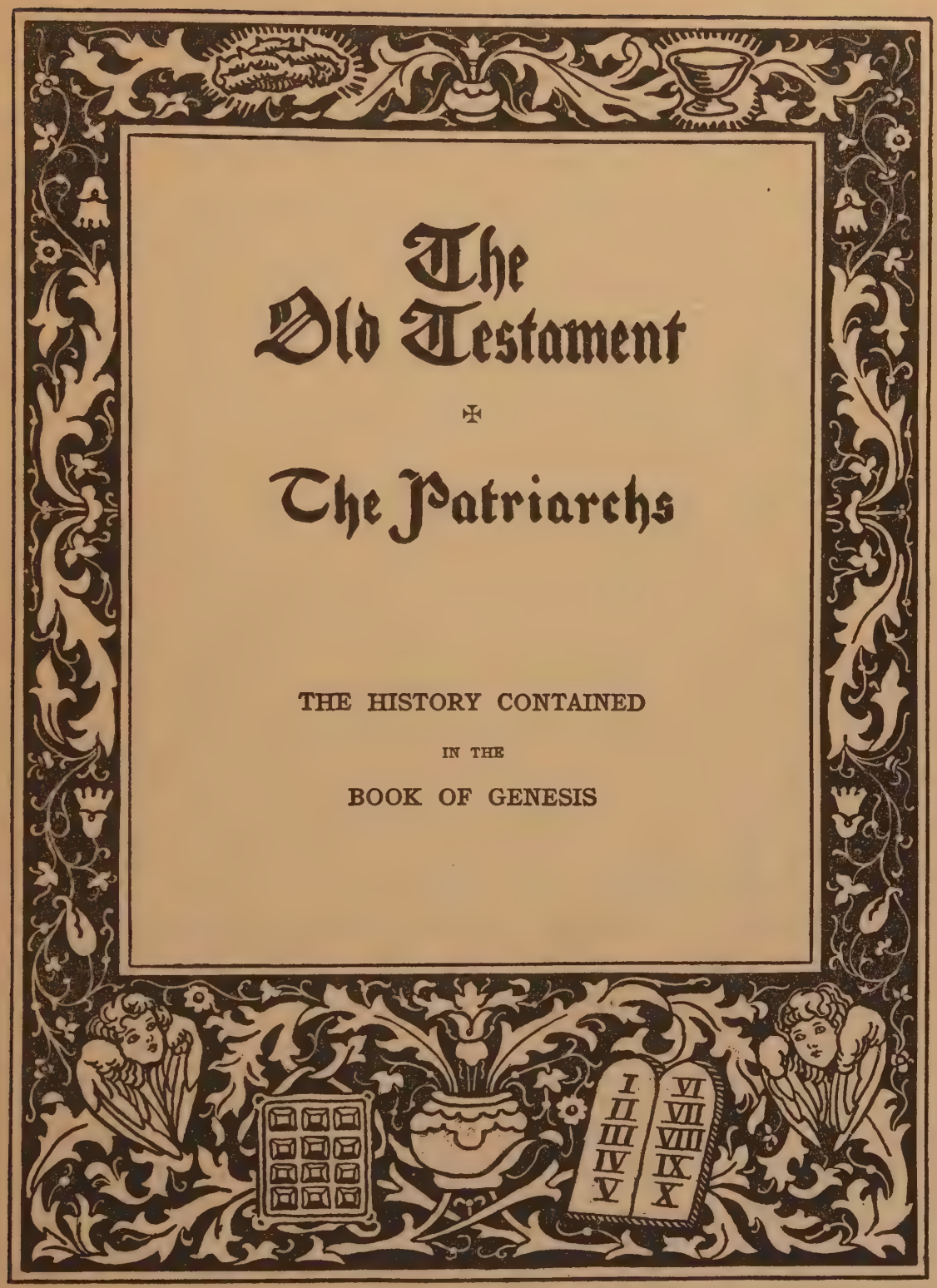
✠

The Patriarchs

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE

BOOK OF GENESIS



Chapter I—THE CREATION

I. THE PERFECT CREATION

ENESIS, the first book of the Bible, begins with the account of the perfect universe created by God, Spirit, and of man created in the image of God. The last book of the Bible, the Revelation of St. John, ends with John's vision of this same universe which he calls the new Jerusalem.

Before the very beginning of things, God was, and when God said "Let there be light," at once the light appeared to mark the first day of creation.

Then God set the firmament, or the heavens, to divide the clouds—the waters above the earth—from the waters on the earth, and that was the second day.

On the third day God drew back the waters on the earth so that the dry land appeared, and on the land grew grass and vegetables and fruit.

God set the sun in the heavens on the fourth day to give light by day, and the moon and stars to lighten the night.

Then God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly and let fowl fly above the earth. And let them multiply and fill the waters and multiply on the earth." And when they appeared, that evening and morning made the fifth day.

On the sixth day God created all the beasts of the earth and everything that creeps upon the ground. And then, last of all, God created man in His own image, and to man He said, "Have dominion over every living thing."

And God saw everything that He had made and knew that it was good.

And on the seventh day God rested from His work, for His creation was complete.

II. ADAM AND EVE

THE first man we read about in the Bible is Adam, formed from the dust of the ground. The first woman is Eve, formed from one of Adam's ribs while he slept. The Lord gave Eve to Adam for his wife so that he should not be lonely.

Then in Eden the Lord made a beautiful garden with a river flowing through

it, and gave it to Adam and Eve to care for. There were two trees in the midst of the garden of Eden, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord gave Adam and Eve perfect freedom; they named and controlled the animals; there was food ready to their hand; they could wander where they pleased. The Lord laid on them only one command.

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat," He said to Adam, "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Adam listened to the command and meant to obey it. The tree of life stood in the midst of Eden and the whole garden was filled with beauty and abundance; he could very well afford to let alone the one tree whose fruit, once tasted, would bring evil into his perfect home.

But among the animals in the garden there was the serpent, even then crafty and venomous and determined that Adam and Eve should not live joyously on in Eden. He went first to Eve.

"Hath God said, 'Ye shalt not eat of every tree of the garden'?" he asked her.

Eve told him that they could eat everything except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but that that fruit would surely bring death.

"Ye shall not surely die," answered the serpent, and then went on coaxing and arguing and showing what a beautiful fruit that one forbidden tree bore till finally Eve was persuaded. She ate of the fruit and gave some to Adam too.

Then right away they knew what they had done; they had brought a knowledge of evil into their beautiful garden and they could no longer be perfectly happy there. They were even afraid of the Lord, whom before they had loved and obeyed, and instead of listening for His voice, when they heard it in the garden in the cool of the day, they ran away and tried to hide themselves among the trees.

But the Lord called unto Adam, "Where art thou?"

"I was afraid and I hid myself," Adam answered.

"Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" asked the Lord.

"The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat," answered Adam, turned coward by his fear.

Then the Lord asked Eve: "What is this that thou hast done?"

"The serpent beguiled me and I did eat," Eve answered.

Then came the punishment. The serpent must crawl always in the dust and hold his life in peril from man whom he had injured; the woman should know sorrow instead of joy in her family; Adam, instead of having his food grow with-

"THE SERPENT WENT ON COAXING AND ARGUING TILL FINALLY EVE WAS PERSUADED"

(5)

out trouble, should now dig and delve to make the earth produce food, and thorns and brambles should spring up to make his work still harder.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," declared the Lord, and sent Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden into the broad, bare world to gain their own living, and at the gate of the garden, to guard the tree of life in the midst of the garden, He placed cherubim with a flaming sword which turned every way. Adam and Eve had left the tree of life behind when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of evil. Up to that time they had known only love and joy and obedience; now, with their disobedience, they had opened for themselves and their children a world of fear and hate and death.

It was not long before little children came to Adam and Eve. Cain came first and then Abel. Like Adam, their father, the two boys, as soon as they were grown, had to begin to earn their own living. Cain, the older, chose the occupation of a farmer and Abel that of a shepherd. Perhaps Abel worked harder and so succeeded better, for Cain soon began to be jealous of him and the jealousy grew to hate.

Since Adam had been driven from the garden he had been afraid of God, and instead of communing with Him "in the cool of the day," he offered sacrifices to the Lord as a sign of his sorrow for sin. Cain and Abel were taught to offer these sacrifices, each of the best of what he had raised.

So Cain brought the fruits of the earth and Abel a lamb from his flock. The Lord accepted Abel's sacrifice but rejected Cain's. His reason could not have been the difference between the lamb and the fruit, but between Abel's love and the hate that was growing in Cain.

Cain was very angry when his offering was not accepted. The Lord spoke to him and said, "Why art thou wroth? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."

Cain, instead of trying to find out what was the sin that was lying at his door to prevent his sacrifice from being accepted, went off to find his brother Abel and lay the blame on him.

He found Abel in the fields at work and began his angry charge. Whatever Abel said made Cain more angry, until at last, beside himself, Cain killed his brother. Hate had brought death into the world.

At once the Lord spoke again to Cain. "Where is Abel, thy brother?" He asked.

"I know not," lied Cain. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

And then came the solemn word of the Lord. "What hast thou done! The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto thee from the ground. And now art thou

cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

"My punishment is more than I can bear," cried Cain to the Lord. "Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

Then the Lord set a mark on Cain that all might know him, and made this decree: "Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold."

Cain went out from the presence of the Lord to wander in sorrow and fear all the days of his life, and Adam and Eve had lost both their children.

Chapter II—THE FLOOD

T was a good many hundred years from the time Adam was driven out of Eden until Noah was born, and each generation had carried Adam's knowledge of evil a little farther until now the world had grown a wicked place. The people had forgotten that God was Spirit; they cared only for material things.

"I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth," said the Lord; "both man and beast and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them.

"Make thee an ark of gopher-wood," God said to Noah; "rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and thou shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, but with thee will I establish my covenant and thou shalt come into the ark. After seven days I will cause it to rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights."

Noah listened to the Lord and obeyed. In spite of those around who must have laughed at their building a ship on dry ground, Noah and his sons, Ham, Shem and Japhet, went to work and in the seven days allowed them built the vessel which was to carry them to safety. When it was finished, with their families and beasts and with food for all, they went in and closed the doors.

Then the waters of the flood descended upon the earth. The windows of heaven were opened and the rain fell for forty days and forty nights until the dry land became a sea that floated Noah's ark. The waters increased until even the hills were covered and there was nothing left alive but Noah's family in the ark.

Finally the rain stopped, but the water lay deep over the earth as one month followed another and still the ark was floating on an ocean that had no shores. So gradually did the water-level fall that it was not till the seventh month that a point of dry land appeared again and the ark rested upon the mountain-top of Ararat. There for three months more Noah and his family stayed, with the seas still about them.

Then Noah, beginning to wonder if the waters were drying away from other parts of the earth, opened a window and let a raven fly out, to see if the raven could find a tree to light upon or must come back to the ark for shelter. The raven had strong wings and could fly a long way.

As the raven did not come back, Noah let out a dove, for he knew a dove would not fly so far. The dove, finding no resting-place, came back to the ark and Noah let her in.

For seven days more he waited and sent the dove out again. It was gone all day this time, but at nightfall it came back to the ark with an olive leaf in its mouth, and Noah to his joy saw that the dry ground was beginning again to appear. After another week he let the dove out once more, and this time it did not come back at all.

Then the word of the Lord came to Noah telling him to go forth out of the ark with everything that was in it, and Noah obeyed. The first thing he did when he stepped on dry ground was to build an altar and offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving for his salvation.

Then God made a covenant with Noah. "I will not again curse the ground for man's sake," He said. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest and cold and heat and summer and winter and day and night shall not cease. Behold I establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature that is upon the earth."

With this covenant between God and men, Noah and his sons settled down again upon the earth. Every rainbow must have been a reminder to them of the care God had promised them and of the obedience they owed Him. Noah's sons taught it to their children, and they taught it to their children, and for a good many years there were obedience and peace on the earth.

But then again mankind forgot God and thought they could take care of themselves. As Adam had thought to gain good by eating of the tree of the

"THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO NOAH TELLING HIM TO GO FORTH OUT OF THE ARK WITH EVERYTHING THAT WAS IN IT"

knowledge of good and evil, men now thought they could build a tower that should reach to heaven and make them all-powerful. They made brick and mortar and built up their tower, one round on another, toward the heaven they thought they could reach by brick and stone.

But just as the children of men thought they were reaching heaven, the word of the Lord came to them.

"Go to. Let us go down and confound their language that they may not understand each other's speech."

So, not understanding God, the children of men failed, too, to understand each other. The work fell into confusion because no one could give directions to uncomprehending ears, and finally they stopped building the tower and became scattered abroad over the face of all the earth, and that was the end of the Tower of Babel.

Chapter III—ABRAHAM

I. ABRAHAM AND LOT

ALL through the Bible we find a few men keen to hear the word of God, eager to trust, quick to obey. Abraham, the father of the Jews, is one of these men. From Abraham's time to ours the Jews have held steadfastly to the fact that there is but one God. If from time to time they forgot Him and turned to idols, there was always some hero among them to rouse them from their sin and bring them back to the true worship.

Abraham, who was at first called Abram, was descended from Noah's oldest son Shem. When Abram's father died the word of the Lord came to Abram repeating to Him His promise to Noah.

"Get thee out of this country," God said, "unto a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation."

Abram had two nephews, Lot and Bethuel. When God's message came and Abram, with Sarai his wife, made ready at once for their journey, Lot went with them, but Bethuel stayed in Padan Aram.

With their flocks and herds Abram and Lot set out to travel south to Canaan. When they came to Shechem Abram built an altar, and there the word of the Lord came again.

"Unto thy descendants will I give this land," the Lord said, and though

Abram was seventy-five years old and had no children, he believed the promise.

By the time that Abram and Lot had come as far as Bethel, where they could overlook the Jordan Valley, their husbandmen were quarreling among each other to get the best pasture land for their own flocks and Abram saw that both he and Lot would get on better if they were separated. They might have to fight the people of the land but they could not afford to fight each other.

"Let there be no strife, I pray thee," said Abram generously to Lot, "between my herdmen and thy herdmen. Is not the whole land before thee? If thou wilt take the left hand, I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

So Lot, given first choice, lifted up his eyes and looked abroad over the plain of the Jordan which lay before him fertile and well watered. There were two wicked cities in that direction—Sodom and Gomorrah—but Lot did not heed that.

"I will choose all the Jordan plain," he said, not seeming to recognize his uncle's generosity.

Abram agreed, and Lot, saying good-by to his uncle, journeyed away with his family, his men and his cattle to take possession of his new home.

After Lot was gone the Lord appeared to Abram and spoke to him. "Lift up now thine eyes," He said, "and look from the place where thou art northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy descendants forever. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee."

Abram, trusting God as he always did, moved his tents to Hebron in the plains of Mamre and, building an altar unto the Lord, he settled down there calmly in the middle of the heathen nations. We do not hear anything about Lot's building an altar.

Meanwhile the heathen kings were fighting among themselves. The king of Elam had for one hundred and twenty years held subject the lesser kings, among them the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. Now the subject kings, gathered in the Dead Sea plain, were in rebellion against Elam, and the king of Elam had come with his allies to punish the rebellion. He crushed it very speedily and swept the plain, carrying away many of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, though the kings escaped. Lot was among the prisoners.

One of Lot's neighbors who was not taken sought out Abram in Hebron to tell him of Lot's misfortune. Abram did not hesitate. He had three hundred and eighteen servants who could bear arms, and with this little force he pursued the king of Elam, grown careless now with victory, fell upon him in the night, routed his force completely, and rescued Lot.

As Abram returned to Hebron, along the road toward them advanced the king of Sodom with meat and drink for Abram's host, and with him was Melchizedek, king of Salem, who was also a priest of God.

"Blessed be Abram of the most high God," Melchizedek said solemnly, "and blessed be the most high God which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."

The king of Sodom offered to Abram the booty Abram had recovered from the king of Elam, but Abram refused to take anything except the food his men had eaten. He went back to the plain of Mamre and Lot went on to his home in Sodom.

Abram was still without the son that God had promised him. But God spoke to him once more.

"Thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee. As for Sarai, thy wife, Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her and she shall be a mother of nations. Sarah shall have a son and thou shalt call his name Isaac."

One day after that Abraham, sitting at his tent's door in the heat of the day while Sarah was busy inside, looked across the plain and saw three men coming toward him. With eastern hospitality he went out to meet them and gave them water to wash off the dust while Sarah prepared them a meal.

When they had eaten, they repeated the promise God had already given that Sarah should have a son.

The angels who had eaten with Abraham were on their way to Sodom to foretell its destruction for its wickedness. When they started on again, Abraham walked with them and learned for the first time what was about to happen. As the messengers left him, Abraham stood still in sorrow.

Then as usual when in trouble, Abraham turned to God to beg for Lot's life.

"Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" Abraham begged. "Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt Thou not spare the place?"

And the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous, I will spare all the place for their sakes."

"Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous?" begged Abraham.

"If I find there forty and five I will not destroy it," God promised.

"Peradventure there shall be forty there?"

And God said, "I will not do it for forty's sake."

"Peradventure there shall be thirty?" asked Abraham again.

And the Lord said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

"Peradventure there shall be twenty?"

"I will not destroy it for twenty's sake."

Then once more Abraham spoke. "Let not the Lord be angry. Peradventure ten shall be found there?"

And again the Lord answered, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

So hoping that there might be ten good men in Sodom to save it, Abraham went back to his tent.

The angels came to Sodom in the evening and found Lot. "Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters that are here lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city," they said, for there were not even ten good men in the city to save it. "Escape for thy life. Look not behind thee, neither stay thee in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

"I cannot escape to the mountain," Lot complained. "Behold now this city is near to flee unto and it is a little one. O, let me escape thither."

"Haste thee, escape thither," said the angels, and Lot hurried on.

It was just at sunrise that Lot and his family entered the little city of Zoar. As they hurried in Lot's wife forgot the angel's command not to look behind. She stopped a moment, curious to see what was happening to Sodom, and cast a look behind her. And immediately she became a pillar of salt that could no longer move on to safety. Lot and his daughters passed in to Zoar without her.

II. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

AFTER the destruction of Sodom, Abraham too moved away from the plains of Mamre and went into the Philistine country to settle, where he dug a well and planted a grove and built an altar to God. He called his settlement Beer-sheba and he lived there many years.

It was at Beer-sheba that Abraham's son Isaac was born. The child grew from a baby to a boy, and his parents loved him with all their hearts.

Then one day came the voice of the Lord. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Abraham had looked ahead to Isaac's children and grand-children to make the nation the Lord had promised. And now he was called on to give up Isaac while he was still a boy.

Abraham told no one what he was going to do, but he rose up, saddled his ass, cut the wood for the burnt offering, and taking Isaac and two servants with him, set out on his journey.

For three days they traveled before they reached Mount Moriah.

"Abide ye here with the ass," Abraham bade his servants, "and I and the lad will go yonder and worship."

With Isaac carrying the wood and Abraham a knife and fire, they went on together. Isaac was puzzled.

"My father," he said, "behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

"My son," Abraham answered, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering," and in silence the two went on.

When they reached the place, Abraham built an altar and put the wood on it for a fire, and then laid Isaac on the altar.

But suddenly the voice of the Lord came again, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here am I," answered Abraham.

"Lay not thy hand upon the lad," commanded the Lord, "neither do thou anything to him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

Abraham, full of joy, freed Isaac, and then he saw, caught by his horns in a thicket, a ram which he could offer on his altar, and he offered him for a burnt offering instead of his son.

Happily Abraham and Isaac went back to the young men with the ass, and happily they all journeyed back to Beer-sheba, where Sarah heard, probably for the first time, of the great test of Abraham's obedience.

III. HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

ABRAHAM, like many of the people of the old times, had two wives; his second wife was named Hagar. Hagar had a little boy named Ishmael, and he was older than Isaac, but because his mother was a slave woman Ishmael could not inherit as Abraham's son.

But Hagar, before Isaac was born, boasting to Sarah that she had a son and Sarah had not, had made Sarah angry and jealous.

After Isaac was born, Ishmael, the older boy, used to tease the little Isaac, and that made Sarah still angrier.

"Cast out this bond-woman and her son," she demanded of Abraham, "for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

It troubled Abraham, for he loved Ishmael too; but Sarah was determined. And finally the word of the Lord came promising to care for Hagar and Ishmael even if Abraham could not keep them at Beer-sheba.

So early in the morning Abraham rose up and took bread and a bottle of water

"HAGAR, NOT KNOWING WHICH WAY TO GO, WANDERED ABOUT FIRST ONE WAY AND THEN ANOTHER"

and gave it to Hagar, telling her she would have to find another home for herself and her son. Then he sent her away.

Hagar, not knowing which way to go to find her new home, wandered about first one way and then another, getting more tired and confused all the time. She ate the food Abraham had provided her and gave some to Ishmael. Then, tired and thirsty, they drank all the water from the leather bottle. After that they wandered on again. On and on they went until the little boy, tired out and parched with thirst, unable to go any farther, threw himself down.

Then Hagar was quite discouraged. She carried Ishmael into the shade and leaving him there, as she thought to die, she withdrew a few paces and sat down too.

"Let me not see the death of the child," she said to herself, and covered her face with her hands and wept.

Then to Hagar came the voice of the Lord. "What aileth thee, Hagar?" it said. "Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad. Arise, lift up the lad, for I will make him a great nation."

Hagar, comforted, stopped crying and lifted up her eyes to look about her. God directed her sight, and there, close at hand, she saw a fresh, bubbling spring, which her tears had so far hid from her. Now joyously she ran to it, filled again her leather water bottle and carried a drink to little Ishmael. Refreshed, the two took up their journey once more, and this time they found a home in the wilderness, and Ishmael grew up under the open sky a sturdy boy, very skillful with his bow and arrow. Finally he married an Egyptian girl and was the head of a large family and the founder of a tribe, as God had promised.

Chapter IV—ISAAC

I. ISAAC AND REBEKAH

AFTER Hagar and Ishmael left them, Abraham and Sarah and Isaac lived many years together until Isaac was a young man. Then they left Beer-sheba and went back to Hebron in the plains of Mamre, where they had lived first. Here Sarah died, one hundred and twenty-seven years old, and Abraham bought for her tomb a piece of ground called the Cave of Macpelah. This was to belong to Abraham and his heirs forever.

After Sarah died, Abraham, feeling himself getting old, was anxious to have Isaac married and settled. Abraham had heard that his brother Nahor, whom he had left back in Ur of the Chaldees, had many children, and that Nahor's son, Bethuel, had a beautiful daughter named Rebekah. Abraham thought she would make a good wife for Isaac.

So he called his chief steward. "Go into my country," he said, "and to my kindred and take a wife unto my son Isaac. The Lord God of heaven, He shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this oath."

The steward swore to Abraham to carry out his wishes. Early the next morning he loaded ten camels with rich raiment and jewels and with all the things he would need for the journey, and then he set out for Padan-aram. After many days' journey he reached the city of Haran one evening at sunset.

There was without the city a well where the women came twice a day to draw water. Here the steward made all his camels kneel down, and he also kneeled down and prayed.

"O Lord God of my master Abraham," he prayed, "behold I stand here and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water. Let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, 'Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink,' and she shall say, 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also,' let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac."

While he was yet praying, Isaac's cousin, Rebekah, young and beautiful, came out of the city gate with her pitcher on her shoulder. She went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up again.

Abraham's steward ran toward her and said, "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher."

Quickly Rebekah answered him, "Drink, my lord. I will draw water for thy camels also."

She gave the steward a drink, emptied the pitcher into the trough, and then ran down to the well to fill it again for the thirsty camels. The steward watched, amazed, scarcely believing his prayer was answered so quickly and that this beautiful girl was to be Isaac's wife.

When the camels were satisfied, the steward took some jewels from one of his packs and gave them to Rebekah. "Whose daughter art thou?" he asked. "Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge?"

"I am the daughter of Bethuel," she answered, "and we have both straw and provender enough and room to lodge in."

Then the steward knew that this girl was Rebekah, grand-daughter of Abraham's brother Nahor, and that God had answered his prayer. Once more he bowed his head and thanked the Lord, while Rebekah ran home to tell of the visitor.

Bethuel had a son, Laban, as well as a daughter, Rebekah. So soon as Laban heard Rebekah's story and saw the jewels in her hands, he ran out to greet Abraham's servant.

"Come in, thou blessed of the Lord," said Laban, "for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels."

So the steward went with Laban, who helped unsaddle the camels and gave them fodder to eat and straw to lie on. Then he gave the steward and his men water to wash in and set food before them.

"I will not eat," said the steward, "until I have told my errand."

"Speak on," answered Laban.

"I am Abraham's servant," went on the steward, "and the Lord hath blessed my master greatly and hath given him flocks and herds and silver and gold. And my master made me swear, saying, 'Go unto my father's house and to my kindred and take a wife unto my son.' And I came this day unto the well and prayed, and before I had done speaking in my heart, behold Rebekah came forth. And I bowed down my head and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's grand-daughter unto his son. And now, if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me, and if not, tell me."

Laban, Rebekah's brother, and Bethuel, her father, answered and said, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord. Behold Rebekah is before thee; take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife as the Lord hath spoken."

Then the steward brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold and rich raiment and gave them to Rebekah; and they all ate and drank and were merry together.

The next morning when the steward was ready to start back, Rebekah's mother begged that her child might stay with her a little longer before she left her to marry Isaac.

"Hinder me not," said the steward, "seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master."

So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Wilt thou go with this man?"

"I will go," answered Rebekah.

They blessed Rebekah, and her damsels made her ready and sent her and

her nurse and her maidens away with Abraham's steward on his camels. Back they traveled day after day over the same road the steward had taken in coming, until one evening they came near to the plains of Mamre.

Isaac, waiting for his bride, was walking in the fields as evening fell, and lifting up his eyes he saw the camel train approaching, bringing him Rebekah.

Rebekah saw Isaac at the same time. "What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?" she asked.

"It is my master's son," answered the steward. And Rebekah alighted from her camel.

Isaac came to greet her and loved her at once. He led her to his father for his blessing. Then, as Isaac's wife, she was given Sarah's tent to live in. And Isaac, who grieved for his mother, was comforted by his wife.

II. JACOB AND ESAU

AFTER Isaac was married, Abraham gave to him all his possessions, and then in a good old age and full of years Abraham was gathered to his fathers; and his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the Cave of Macpelah with Sarah his wife.

By and by to Isaac and Rebekah were born two little boys; the older one was called Esau and the younger one Jacob. Esau was the stronger of the two, red-haired, with rough, hairy arms and hands. He liked to be out of doors and soon became a great hunter, while Jacob stayed closer to home. Isaac was very fond of Esau and liked to eat the game Esau brought in, but Rebekah loved Jacob better.

Though Jacob through all the trials that came to him grew finally into a strong, good man, in his youth he was sometimes selfish and deceitful and jealous of his older brother Esau. Jacob would have liked to be the older son and to inherit all his father's riches.

One day as Esau came in from hunting, tired and very hungry, he smelled the delicious odor of the stew that his brother Jacob was making, and he thought he could not wait to get some of it.

"Feed me, I pray thee," Esau begged Jacob, "with that same red pottage, for I am faint."

We might think that Jacob would have been only too glad to share his meal with his brother, but Jacob saw a chance to drive a hard bargain and get what he had long yearned for.

"Sell me this day thy birthright," bargained Jacob.

Esau thought a minute. He did not want to give away his right as oldest

"REBEKAH, YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL, CAME OUT OF THE CITY GATE AND WENT DOWN TO THE WELL"

son, but he was a quick, careless fellow who lived in the present more than in the future. Just now food looked more important than a birthright.

"Behold," he thought, "without food I am at the point to die, and what profit then shall this birthright be to me?" So he answered his brother, "Yes."

"Swear to me this day," said the crafty Jacob, and Esau swore to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. He ate his fill and rose up and went his way, and Jacob had taken Esau's birthright.

About this time there was a drought in Hebron and the crops failed. Isaac, finding no food in the plains of Mamre, packed his tents, loaded his camels and, gathering his people together with his flocks and his herds, started down to Egypt where the Nile kept the land always fertile.

Isaac journeyed south with his caravan through the land of the Philistines until he came to Gerar, where Abraham had lived and quarreled with the Philistines about the wells, and had finally made a treaty with Abimelech, king of the Philistines. There was still an Abimelech, king of the Philistines, and he welcomed Isaac, who settled down in the land, sowed his crops and reaped a wonderful harvest.

Then, as Isaac's crops and herds increased, Abimelech began to be afraid to have such a powerful tribe encamped in his country. "Go from us," he said, "for thou art much mightier than we."

But the Lord appeared to Isaac here at Gerar as He had appeared to Abraham before and repeated to Isaac the same blessing He had already given to Noah and to Abraham.

"Sojourn in this land," He said, "and I will be with thee, and I will perform the oath that I sware unto Abraham thy father. And I will make thy descendants to multiply as the stars of heaven and will give unto thy descendants all these countries because that Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my commandment."

So Isaac withdrew only as far as Beer-sheba and there lived and prospered though the Philistines were against him. They had filled up the wells that Abraham had dug, and now, whenever Isaac's herdmen found a new spring and dug it out, the Philistines filled it up again. One well after another Isaac dug and lost and dug again, until finally Abimelech came to visit Isaac.

"Wherefore come ye to me," Isaac asked Abimelech, "seeing that ye hate me and have sent me away from you?"

"We saw certainly," Abimelech answered, "that the Lord was with thee. Let there be now an oath betwixt us that thou wilt do us no hurt as we have not touched thee."

So Isaac took the oath and made a great feast for his visitors and sent them away the next day in peace, and after that no one filled up the wells that he dug and he lived in comfort for many years with his wife and sons until Isaac grew to be an old man.

Jacob may have told his mother that way back in Hebron he had bought his brother's birthright for a mess of pottage, but Esau does not seem to have complained of his bargain to his father, for Issac still looked on Esau as his heir and, before he died, wanted to give Esau the blessing of the first-born. Isaac's eyesight was dim; he could not see much, but he liked to feel Esau's rough, hairy hands and he liked the outdoor smell that Esau always brought with him. One day he called Esau, and Esau came to him.

"Behold now I am old," Isaac said. "I know not the day of my death. Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field and take me some venison and make me savory meat such as I love and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless thee before I die."

Rebekah was with Isaac when he spoke to Esau, and as soon as Esau was gone off with his bow to hunt game, she went to find Jacob, for she wanted her favorite son to keep the rights of the oldest son which he had bought from Esau, and she was willing to deceive her husband to gain her point.

"Jacob," she said breathlessly, "behold I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother saying, 'bring me venison and make me savory meat that I may eat and bless thee.' Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock and fetch me thence two kids, and I will make them savory meat for thy father such as he loveth. And thou shalt bring it to thy father that he may eat and that he may bless thee before his death."

Jacob did not object to the dishonesty of the plan; he only thought of the weak places.

"Behold," he said, "Esau, my brother, is a hairy man and I am a smooth man; my father, peradventure, will feel me and I shall seem to him as a deceiver and I shall bring a curse upon me and not a blessing."

"Upon me be thy curse," answered Rebekah, "only obey my voice and go fetch me them."

So Jacob brought the kids and Rebekah hastily made the pottage that Isaac loved. Then, with trembling hands, for she must hurry to put through her plan before Esau should come back, she fastened the goat skin over Jacob's hands and arms and neck and dressed him in Esau's clothes. Then she put the pottage into his hands and sent him to his father, while she sat down to wait.

Jacob, carrying the savory stewed meat, came into Isaac's presence.

"My father," he said.

"Here am I," answered Isaac. "Who art thou, my son?"

And Jacob spoke to his father the lie his mother had taught him. "I am Esau, thy first-born," he said. "I have done according as thou badest me. Arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison that thy soul may bless me."

"How is it thou hast found it so quickly, my son?" Isaac asked.

And Jacob to cover his first lie spoke another even worse. "Because the Lord thy God brought it to me," he answered.

Isaac, still a little puzzled, spoke again. "Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not."

And Jacob went near to Isaac who put his hands on him murmuring, "The voice is Jacob's voice but the hands are the hands of Esau. Art thou my very son Esau?"

"I am," answered Jacob again.

Then Isaac seemed satisfied. "Bring it near to me," he said, "and I will eat of my son's venison that my soul may bless thee."

Jacob brought the pottage to his father and Isaac ate it while Jacob waited. Then Isaac spoke again.

"Come near now and kiss me, my son."

As Jacob kissed his father Isaac caught the smell of Esau's clothes. "See," he exclaimed, "the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed. Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth. Let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

Jacob rose from his knees with his father's blessing of the oldest son, which Jacob had stolen from his brother, and went back to Rebekah. Scarcely had he gone when Esau came in eagerly with his savory meat.

"Let my father arise," he said, "and eat of his son's venison that thy soul may bless me."

Then Isaac, alarmed, asked quickly, "Who art thou?"

"I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau," answered Esau wonderingly.

Isaac was seized with a great fear. "Where," he cried, "is he that hath taken venison and brought it me and I have eaten it all before thou camest and have blessed him. Yea, and he shall be blessed."

When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, "Bless me, even me also, O my father."

"Thy brother came with subtlety," answered Isaac sadly, "and hath stolen away thy blessing."

"He hath supplanted me these two times," mourned Esau. "He took away my birthright and behold now he hath taken away my blessing. Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?"

"Behold I have made him thy lord," answered Isaac, "and all his brethren have I given him for servants. What shall I do now unto thee, my son?"

"Hast thou not one blessing, my father," cried Esau again in tears. "Bless me, even me also, O my father."

And Isaac gave Esau his blessing. "Behold," he said, "thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above, and by thy sword shalt thou live."

Esau went sadly from his father's presence and with fierce anger against Jacob in his heart.

"It will not be long before my father dies," he thought, "and when he is no longer here, then I will slay my brother Jacob."

"Behold," Rebekah said to Jacob, "thy brother Esau doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now, therefore, my son, arise, flee to Laban, my brother in Padan-aram, and tarry with him a few days until thy brother's fury turn away."

Then Rebekah went to tell Isaac that Jacob was going to her brother Laban to choose a wife among his own people, and Isaac, remembering how Abraham would not let him marry a heathen woman, agreed to Jacob's going.

"Go to Padan-aram," he said to Jacob, "and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban. And God Almighty bless thee that thou mayest inherit the land which God gave to Abraham."

So Jacob set out for Padan-aram. He thought to be gone only a little while, but it was many years before he saw his home again.

Chapter V—JACOB

I. JACOB AT BETHEL

JACOB journeyed until sunset and then, reaching a place he thought good for a camp, he settled there for the night. With a stone for a pillow he went to sleep. In his sleep he saw a ladder whose top reached heaven and on it the angels of God ascending and descending.

"I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac," came the voice of the Lord. "The land on which thou liest, to thee will I give it and to

"IN HIS SLEEP JACOB SAW A LADDER WHOSE TOP REACHED HEAVEN AND ON IT THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING"

thy descendants. And behold I will keep thee in all the places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again unto this land which I have spoken to thee of."

Then Jacob waked up and it was morning, and the memory of his vision was with him. "Surely," he said, "the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place."

We never read that Abraham was frightened when God talked to him; but, like Adam in the garden of Eden, Jacob had a guilty conscience. He called the place Bethel, and built an altar where he worshiped God and made a vow.

"If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God."

II. JACOB AND LABAN

JACOB left the altar at Bethel and went on his way a little more thoughtful for his vision and his vow. God was no longer merely the God of his father and grandfather, but Jacob had taken Him as his own God from this time forth.

After long days of travel Jacob came at last near Haran of Padan-aram, and there he chanced on a cistern in a field, and round about it were gathered shepherds with their flocks. The cistern's mouth was covered with a great stone.

Jacob stopped to speak to the shepherds. "Whence be ye, my brethren?" he asked.

"Of Haran are we," they answered.

"Know ye Laban?" asked Jacob.

"We know him," they said.

"Is he well?" Jacob asked again.

"He is well," they answered; "and behold Rachel, his daughter, cometh with the sheep."

And Jacob said, "Lo, it is high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together. Water ye the sheep and go and feed them."

"We cannot," said the shepherds, "until all the flocks be gathered together and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."

While Jacob was talking to the shepherds, Rachel drew near with her father's sheep, for she kept them. She was a beautiful girl, and Jacob loved her as soon as he saw her. He went to her at once and kissed her and rolled away the great stone for her and helped her water her flock.

As they worked, Jacob told Rachel that he was her cousin, the son of Re-

bekah, sister to Laban, Rachel's father. As soon as she knew who he was, Rachel sped home to tell her parents.

Laban, overjoyed at the news, came hurrying out to meet Jacob. He kissed him and led him home, and Jacob became one of his family.

For a month Jacob stayed with Laban, working for his living and watching every day for word from his mother that Esau had forgiven him and that it was safe for him to go home again. But the message did not come.

At the end of the month Laban said to Jacob: "Because thou art my kinsman, shouldst thou therefore serve me for naught? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?"

Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Leah was plain but Rachel was beautiful and Jacob still loved her.

So he answered Laban, "I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter."

"It is better," answered Laban, "that I give her to thee than that I should give her to another man. Abide with me."

So Jacob stayed seven years as overseer of Laban's flocks, tending them carefully and waiting for the day when Rachel should be his wife. And all this time his mother did not send for him.

Finally the seven years were over and Laban gave to Jacob one of his daughters for a wife. But instead of the beautiful Rachel it was the plain Leah.

"What is this that thou hast done to me?" Jacob asked indignantly. "Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore hast thou so beguiled me?"

"It must not be so done in our country to give the younger before the firstborn," Laban answered, and then promised Jacob, Rachel, if he would serve Laban another seven years.

Angry as he was at the deceit, Jacob loved Rachel enough to agree to Laban's bargain; and Rachel, too, became his wife.

Then Jacob had many children. Reuben was the oldest, then came Simeon and Levi and Judah and Dan and Naphtali and Gad and Asher and Issacher and Zebulon, but none of these was Rachel's son. When her son was born she called his name Joseph.

Jacob loved Joseph as he loved Joseph's mother, Rachel, and immediately he wanted to take his family back to Isaac's tents that Isaac and Rebekah might know them.

"Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served thee," Jacob said to Laban, "and let me go, for thou knowest my service which I have done thee."

"I pray thee tarry," answered Laban, "for I have learned that the Lord doth bless me for thy sake. Appoint thy wages, and I will give it."

So Jacob agreed to stay to work for Laban a little longer, and for his wages asked that he might take certain sheep and cattle out of Laban's flocks and herds. When Laban agreed to this Jacob, who had charge of all the cattle, arranged matters so that all the strongest beasts belonged to him and the weaker ones were left to Laban. So though he grew rich in worldly goods, Jacob had not yet learned strict honesty.

It was not long before Laban's sons began to grumble as they saw their father's wealth passing into Jacob's hands.

"Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's," they complained, "and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory."

Jacob heard what they said, and seeing too that Laban was growing less fond of him, Jacob longed once more to take his family and his flocks and return to his father Isaac.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jacob. "Return unto the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred and I will be with thee."

So Jacob, from where he was with his flocks in the field, sent for Leah and Rachel, his wives, to come to him.

"I see your father's countenance," he said to them, "that it is not toward me as before, but the God of my father hath been with me. And He said, 'I am the God of Bethel where thou vowedst a vow unto me; now arise, get thee from out this land and return unto the land of thy kindred.'"

And Rachel and Leah answered, "Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do."

Afraid to tell Laban what he meant to do, Jacob secretly and hastily gathered his household together. He put his wives and children on camels with his portable riches, and gathered his cattle into flocks to drive before him. Then he stole away unknown to Laban, fleeing with all that he had across the river and toward Mount Gilead.

Laban was away with his flocks when Jacob fled, and it was three days before he found out that Jacob was gone. Then with his sons he set out in pursuit and after seven days' chase came up with Jacob at Mount Gilead.

"What hast thou done," Laban cried, "that thou hast stolen away unawares and carried away my daughters as captives? It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt, but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight."

"I was afraid," Jacob answered, "for I said, peradventure thou wouldst take by force thy daughters from me. What is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued

after me? I have been twenty years in thy house, and except the God of my father had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty."

"Come thou," Laban answered, "let us make a covenant, I and thou, and let it be for a witness between me and thee."

So Jacob took a stone and set it up for a pillar, and called the place Mispah.

"For," said Laban, "the Lord watch between thee and me and when we are absent one from another. This heap be witness that I will not pass over his heap to thee, and thou shalt not pass over this heap unto me, for harm."

Early in the morning Laban rose up and kissed his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned unto his place.

III. JACOB AND THE ANGEL

WHEN Laban had gone back to his own home, Jacob started on his way again down to the plains of Mamre where were Isaac and Rebekah. In his journey he drew near to the land owned by his brother Esau. Jacob had not heard from Esau for twenty years and was still afraid of him. Jacob made camp, therefore, and sent his servants ahead with a message to Esau.

"Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau," he said. "'Thy servant Jacob saith thus: I have sojourned with Laban and stayed there until now, and I have oxen and asses, flocks and men-servants and women-servants. And I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.'"

Jacob's messengers went off with his humble message, and he waited till their return. They were not long.

"We came to thy brother Esau," they said, "and he cometh to meet thee and four hundred men with him."

Jacob was terribly frightened. Thinking that Esau was coming to punish him, Jacob divided his host into two parts, and to each part he gave charge of half of his family.

"If Esau come to the one company and smite it," he said, "then the other company which is left shall escape."

Then Jacob, knowing his peril, did the best thing any one can do when he is afraid: he turned to God in prayer.

"O God," he prayed, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies which thou hast showed thy servant, for with my staff I passed over Jordan and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, for I fear him lest he will come and smite me and the mother with the children.

And Thou saidst, 'I will surely do thee good and make thy descendants as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude.' "

Somewhat comforted, Jacob went among his flock and chose out his best sheep and goats and camels and cows and divided them into many flocks. Over each flock he set a servant, and he started the first out to meet Esau.

"When Esau meeteth thee," he said, "and asketh thee 'Whose are these?' then thou shalt say, 'They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau; and behold also, thy servant Jacob is behind us.' "

After the first flock was well on its way, Jacob started the second and then the third and the fourth, each with the same message to Esau. He himself stayed by the camp.

But he could not sleep that night. He rose from his bed and sent his wives and eleven sons across the brook Jabbok for greater safety, and he stayed alone by his tent with his fear, praying to God.

As he prayed an angel of the Lord came to him and Jacob wrestled with him until the day broke. Then, seeing that Jacob still held him, the angel touched Jacob's thigh and put it out of joint.

"Let me go," said the angel, "for the day breaketh."

"I will not let thee go except thou bless me," declared Jacob.

"What is thy name?" asked the angel.

"Jacob," he answered.

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob," proclaimed the angel, "but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed."

"I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved," Jacob said to himself. And he called the place Peniel.

Then the day broke, and Israel, lifting up his eyes, saw in the distance Esau with his band coming toward them. Hastily gathering his family together, Israel went to meet Esau.

Esau ran toward him and, taking his brother in his arms, kissed him. Esau wanted to refuse all the presents his brother had sent him, but Israel urged him to take them, and Esau presently agreed. Finally he went back to his own home, leaving Israel to travel on more slowly because of his many flocks.

As Israel went, the word of the Lord came to him. "Arise," it said, "go up to Bethel and make there an altar to God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau, thy brother."

Israel, who knew more about God now than when he had slept at Bethel twenty years before, brought his family to Bethel, and worshiped God there, and there God spoke to him again and called him by his new name of Israel.

"And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it and to thy descendants after thee," God promised.

Then they went on toward Hebron and, as they journeyed, Israel's twelfth son was born. He called his name Benjamin, and because it was Rachel's son, Israel loved Benjamin as he loved Joseph. But Rachel died and was buried, and Israel set up a tomb upon her grave at Bethlehem.

Finally with all his children Israel reached the plains of Mamre and saw once more his father Isaac. After Isaac had seen his grandchildren, he was content to die. Esau and Israel buried him in the cave of Macpelah.

Chapter VI—JOSEPH

I. JOSEPH'S COAT OF MANY COLORS

FTER Isaac's death his son Israel inherited his land and possessions and settled down in Isaac's place. There were twelve sons to comfort Israel's heart, but he always loved best Rachel's children who were the youngest, Joseph and Benjamin.

Because Israel loved Joseph so well, all the older boys were jealous of him and, as they grew into men and became afraid that Joseph would be the one whom Israel would choose to inherit his riches, Joseph's brothers began to hate him.

Israel showed his love for Joseph by making him a special coat, "a coat of many colors," which Joseph wore. Whenever his older brothers saw it, they were angry, until by and by they could not even speak to him pleasantly.

And then Joseph made matters worse one day when they were watching the sheep together by telling his brothers a dream he had had.

"We were binding sheaves in the field," he said, "and lo, my sheaf stood upright, and behold, your sheaves stood round about it and made obeisance to my sheaf."

"Shalt thou, indeed, reign over us?" cried his brothers, and hated him even more.

But a few days later Joseph had another dream and that, too, he told to his father and to his brothers.

"Behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me," he declared.

His father, though he rebuked him for thinking that he was to be so great, did not forget this dream of Joseph's. But his older brothers hated him yet the more, though they hid their feelings from their father.

Finally the older sons were sent off to Shechem with the flocks and herds to find pasturage, while Joseph and Benjamin stayed home. When they had been gone some time Israel spoke to Joseph.

"Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them. See whether it be well with thy brethren and with the flocks and bring me word again."

So Joseph started out from Hebron in the plains of Mamre for Shechem. But he could not find his brethren. At last, when he was wandering about from field to field looking for them, Joseph met a man who told him that his brothers had gone farther on to Dothan to find better pasture, and Joseph set out for Dothan.

The ten sons of Israel, resting in the fields with their flocks, saw Joseph coming in the distance.

"Behold this dreamer cometh," said one.

Then another of them spoke, with the quick thought that so far away from home there was no one to protect the boy.

"Come now," he said, "let us slay him and cast him into some pit, and we will say, 'Some evil beast hath devoured him.' And we shall see what shall become of his dreams."

But Reuben, the oldest son, interfered. "Shed no blood," he said, "but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness." For Reuben meant to take Joseph out of the pit again and carry him safe back to his father.

The brothers listened to Reuben. They did not kill Joseph, but when he reached them, they seized him, took off his coat of many colors, and dropped him down into the dry pit. Then they sat down to their midday meal—all but Reuben, who was off on some other duty.

As the sons of Israel sat there, they saw a long merchant train coming toward them. They were Midianite merchants carrying spicery and balm and myrrh to sell in Egypt.

Then Judah, too, had a quick idea. "What profit is it," he asked the others, "if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Midianites and let not our hand be upon him."

His brothers agreed to this. When the train came near enough, they drew Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver. The brothers took the money and Joseph was carried off into Egypt.

Then Reuben went secretly to the pit to draw out Joseph and carry him home. But the pit was empty. Reuben rent his clothes to show his despair, and hurried back to his brothers.

"The child is not," he exclaimed, "and I—whither shall I go?"

Then the brothers had to make up a story to tell their father. They picked up Joseph's coat of many colors from the ground and dipped it into the blood of a goat. Then herding up their flocks, they set out for home, carrying the little stained coat with them.

"This have we found," they told their father, who was anxiously waiting for Joseph. "Know now whether it be thy son's coat or no?"

Israel seized it, saw the red stain and thought it was Joseph's blood. "It is my son's coat," he cried. "An evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces."

Then Israel, too, rent his clothes and put on sackcloth and sat many days mourning for Joseph. His children tried to comfort him but they could not do it.

"I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning," Israel declared.

So in his old age Israel was deceived by his sons, just as in his youth he had deceived his own father.

II. JOSEPH IN PRISON

WHILE Israel at home mourned for his son, Joseph was journeying down into Egypt with the Midianites. Day by day they traveled south through Arabia until finally they came to Egypt, where Pharaoh was king. There the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard.

Joseph, handsome, clever and upright, at once found favor with Potiphar, who made him overseer of his household and before long trusted him with everything he had, so that Potiphar scarcely knew his own possessions. For Joseph had begun early to be acquainted with Abraham's God and obeyed him. So the Lord made all that Joseph did to prosper.

After Joseph had been for some time in Potiphar's household, Potiphar's wife grew dissatisfied with him and made Potiphar believe finally that Joseph was not the faithful servant he thought him. So Potiphar took away Joseph's honors from him and put Joseph in prison.

The keeper of the prison, as soon as he saw Joseph, knew that he was a man to be trusted, and he too made Joseph an overseer. All the prisoners were under his care and the keeper trusted him so fully that he paid no attention to what Joseph did. For the Lord prospered all that he did.

In the prison were two servants of Pharaoh—his chief butler and his chief

baker—put there because they had in some way offended the king. Joseph soon became friends with both of these men.

One night the chief butler and the chief baker had a dream. In the morning when Joseph went in to see them they were both looking sad.

"Wherefore look ye so sad to-day?" Joseph asked.

"We have dreamed a dream and there is no interpretation of it," they answered.

"Do not interpretations belong to God?" asked Joseph. "Tell me them, I pray you."

The chief butler told his dream first. He had been standing by a vine, and while he watched, the vine had thrown out three branches, and the branches budded and brought forth grapes, and the chief butler had picked the grapes, pressed the juice into Pharaoh's goblet, and then had set the goblet in Pharaoh's hand

"The three branches are three days," said Joseph. "Within three days shall Pharaoh restore thee unto thy place and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand after the former manner when thou wast his butler. Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and make mention of me to Pharaoh and bring me out of this house."

Then the chief baker told his dream. He had been standing with three baskets on his head filled with bread for Pharaoh, and the birds had dropped down and eaten the bread out of the baskets.

"The three baskets are three days," said Joseph, "and within three days shall Pharaoh hang thee."

Three days later it happened as Joseph had said. It was Pharaoh's birthday, when he made a feast to all his servants. He remembered then his grievances against his chief butler and chief baker. The butler he forgave and restored to his old position, but the baker he hanged.

The butler, in favor again, forgot entirely his friend Joseph in prison, and for two years more Joseph stayed there, thinking of his people at home and wondering if he should ever see them again.

At the end of the two years Pharaoh had a dream. He thought that he stood by a river and saw coming up the bank seven plump, sleek cows to feed on the meadow. And as he looked, seven lean, bad-looking cows came up after them and ate up the seven fat cows. Pharaoh waked up then, but when he fell asleep again he had another dream. Seven ears of good full corn came up on one stalk and while Pharaoh watched them, seven ears blasted with the east wind sprang up and devoured the seven good ears. And once more Pharaoh woke up.

The dream troubled him, for people in those days paid great heed to dreams. As soon as it was light Pharaoh sent for all the magicians of Egypt and told them his dream. But one after another they shook their heads; they none of them knew what the dream meant.

Then suddenly the chief butler, who had selfishly forgotten Joseph all this time, brought him again to mind. He told Pharaoh about the Hebrew lad in prison who had so truly interpreted both the butler's dream and the baker's, and Pharaoh sent at once for Joseph.

Then there was much commotion in the prison, for Pharaoh was a great king and could not be kept waiting. Joseph was hastily called, and as quickly he shaved and bathed and put on fine raiment, and was led into Pharaoh's presence.

"I have dreamed a dream," said Pharaoh graciously, "and I have heard that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it."

"It is not in me," Joseph answered modestly. "God shall give Pharaoh an answer. God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years and the seven good ears are seven years. The seven ill-favored kine and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. Behold there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, and there shall arise after them seven years of famine. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man, discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt, and let him gather food of those good years and lay up corn and keep food in the cities, and that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, that the land perish not through the famine."

"Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this," said the king, "there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy words shall all my people be ruled. Only in the throne will I be greater than thou. See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt."

Then as Joseph stood before him, Pharaoh took a ring from his own hand and put it on Joseph's; he put a gold chain about his neck and sent for fine linen to clothe him. And Pharaoh gave Asenath, the daughter of an Egyptian priest, to be Joseph's wife.

III. JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

IN the seven years of plenty two little sons were born to Joseph and Asenath. The older was called Manasseh and the younger Ephraim. Then the seven fruitful years were at an end and the famine came. Joseph was very busy, for he had not only to supply all Egypt but all the world beside that lay within a camel's

"'BEHOLD THERE COME SEVEN YEARS OF GREAT PLENTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND THERE SHALL ARISE AFTER THEM SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE'"

journey to Egypt. The famine was everywhere, and no one but Pharaoh had been wise enough to provide for it.

To Israel's household in Hebron the famine came too. "Behold," Israel said to his sons, "I have heard that there is corn in Egypt. Get you down hither and buy for us from thence. But Benjamin I will not send lest peradventure mischief befall him."

So the ten older brothers with their empty bags on their asses set off down to Egypt to buy food for the household. They did not recognize the governor of Egypt as their younger brother, but Joseph knew them at once, and he remembered too his dreams which had made them so angry.

"Whence come ye?" he asked.

"From the land of Canaan to buy food," they answered humbly.

"Nay," he said roughly, "ye are spies. To see the nakedness of the land are ye come."

"Nay, my lord," they protested. "We are true men; thy servants are not spies. Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."

Joseph's heart stirred at the thought of his youngest brother whom he loved.

"Hereby shall ye be proved," he said. "If ye be true men, let one of you be bound in prison, that your words may be proved, and go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses. But bring your youngest brother unto me, so shall your words be proved whether there be any truth in them, or else surely ye are spies."

Joseph had spoken to his brothers through an interpreter, as he spoke to all strangers, and they did not know he could understand Hebrew speech. So as they stood before him now, panic-struck by his command, they began to talk to each other in their own tongue.

"This distress has come upon us," they said, "because when we saw the anguish of our brother Joseph, and he besought us, we would not hear. We are verily guilty concerning our brother."

"Spoke I not unto you," asked Reuben, the eldest, 'Do not sin against the child,' and ye would not hear?"

Joseph was greatly moved when the old familiar speech fell upon his ears and he heard his brothers sorrowing for their cruelty to him, but he held to his plan. He chose Simeon as the hostage, and told all the rest to take their grain and go. Before they went Joseph directed his servants who filled the sacks to put in on the top of the sacks the money each man had paid for his grain.

So sadly the nine brothers, leaving Simeon behind, loaded the grain on their

pack-train and journeyed back home. When one of them by the way opened his sack to feed the asses, he found his money in the bag.

"My money is restored," he said to his brethren with a quick breath, "and lo, it is even in my sack."

All the nine men were frightened, for they thought that Joseph now would accuse them of stealing it. With heavy hearts they journeyed on and came at last to their father, to whom they told all that had happened to them. Then they emptied their sacks, and behold, every man's money was in the top of his sack, and they were more frightened than ever.

"Me have ye bereaved of my children," mourned Israel. "Joseph is not and Simeon is not and ye will take Benjamin away," and he would not let Benjamin go.

But after a while the grain was all eaten and still there was famine in Canaan.

"Go again," Israel said, "and buy us a little food."

Then Judah answered: "If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down, for the man said, 'Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you.' I will be surety for him."

And Reuben said, "Slay my two sons if I bring Benjamin not to thee. I will bring him to thee again."

"If it must be so," answered Israel sadly, "carry down the man a present and take double money and the money that was in your sacks. Take also your brother. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin."

So once more they saddled their asses and journeyed down with Benjamin into Egypt and stood before Joseph.

Still Joseph did not tell them who he was. He told his steward to take them to his house and make ready a great dinner, for he would have all these men to dine with him.

Frightened, the brothers went to Joseph's house, saying among themselves, "Because of the money that was returned in our sacks are we brought in, that he may take us for bondmen."

Then one of them tried to explain to Joseph's steward that they had not stolen the money and that they had brought it back again.

"Fear not," answered the steward kindly, "I had your money."

So he gave them water to wash away the dust of their journey, and led out Simeon to them. Then they arranged the present they had brought to Joseph from Canaan.

"JOSEPH WAS OVERCOME AT THE SIGHT OF HIS BROTHER BENJAMIN"

When Joseph came in, his brothers hastened to give him the treasures they had for him. He began asking again about their family.

"Is your father well of whom ye spake?"

"Thy servant, our father, is in good health," they answered.

"Is this your younger brother?" Joseph asked again. "God be gracious unto thee, my son."

Joseph was so overcome at the sight of his brother Benjamin that he had to go away by himself until he could get control of himself again.

When he had got his self-control back, he ordered the dinner served. Joseph ate at a table quite alone, as if he had been a king; the Egyptians had their table, and the Hebrews a table to themselves, and as a matter of courtesy to his guests, Joseph sent dishes from his table to theirs, but the best things went always to Benjamin.

When the meal was over Joseph said to his steward, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth, and put my cup in the sack's mouth of the youngest and his corn money."

The steward did as he was told, and early in the morning Joseph's eleven brothers loaded their asses and started for home. When they were beyond the city gates, Joseph spoke to his steward.

"Follow after the men," he said, "and say unto them, 'Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this the cup in which my lord drinketh?' "

The steward caught the men outside the city gates and accused them of stealing Joseph's cup, as Joseph had commanded him. The brothers were indignant.

"God forbid that thy servants should do this thing," they protested. "With whomsoever of thy servants the cup be found, let him die, and we will be my lord's bondmen."

"Let it be according to your words," said the steward. "He with whom it is found shall be my servant and ye shall be blameless."

Quickly every man let down his sack to the ground and opened it. The cup was not in Reuben's sack, nor in Simeon's, nor in Judah's, nor in Levi's, nor in Dan's, nor in Naphtali's, nor in Gad's, nor in Asher's, nor in Zebulon's, nor in Issachar's. But when the steward looked into Benjamin's sack, there on top in plain sight lay the silver cup.

In despair the brothers rent their clothes, once more loaded their asses and turned their faces back toward the city to plead with Joseph for Benjamin's freedom. When they came again into his presence, they fell on their faces before him.

"What deed is this that ye have done?" asked Joseph sternly.

Then Judah spoke for his brothers. He told Joseph how the famine in Canaan had sent them into Egypt; he told him about his old father Israel, who loved his two youngest sons and who would scarcely let Benjamin out of his sight now that Joseph was lost to him; he told about their persuasion to allow Benjamin to come down to buy corn and of his father's sorrow if Benjamin should not come back.

"How shall we clear ourselves?" asked Judah sadly. "When I come to my father and the lad be not with us, he will die. And thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father saying, 'If I bring him not again, then I shall bear the blame forever.' Now therefore let thy servant abide instead of the lad as a bondman unto my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father and the lad be not with me?"

Once more Joseph's heart was touched. He saw that his brothers had changed much since they sold him to the Midianites, for now they loved their father and his favorite Benjamin, and would give up their lives to save him sorrow.

"Cause every man to go out from me," he commanded, and stood alone with his brothers. Then as they waited, fearful of some new evil about to befall them, he turned to them and spoke.

"I am Joseph," he said. "Doth my father yet live?"

No one answered him. Now the brothers understood what had happened to them and they were more fearful than ever, for had not Joseph a right to be angry? What would he do to punish them, now that he was in power?

"I am Joseph, your brother," Joseph said again, stretching out his hand. "Come near to me, I pray you." And as they came nearer, he went on: "Be not angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. And He has made me a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, go up to my father and say unto him, 'Thus saith thy son Joseph: "God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me; tarry not, and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen and there will I nourish thee." ' And behold, your eyes see that it is my mouth that speakest to you, and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither."

Then Joseph embraced Benjamin, and one after another all his brothers. And the news came to Pharaoh's palace and pleased him. He added his commands to Joseph's, and sent wagons to carry the women and the children from Canaan to Egypt where they should live till the famine was over.

Back to Canaan in joyful haste traveled Joseph's brothers, and stood at last before their father.

"Joseph is yet alive," they told him, "and he is governor over all the land of Egypt."

The joy was so great to Israel that he fainted, but when he recovered and heard all the story and saw the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to bring him and his children down to Egypt, then Israel believed.

"It is enough," he exclaimed joyfully. "Joseph, my son, is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

IV. JOSEPH AND HIS FATHER

AS quickly as was possible Joseph's brothers packed their goods in the wagons, and after they had gathered their cattle together, they set off to the south to Egypt. On their way they stopped at Beer-sheba, where Jacob and Esau had lived as boys. Here God spake to Israel.

"I am God," He said. "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt and I will also surely bring thee up again."

Sure then that they were doing right, Israel and his sons went on their way, and as they drew near at last to Goshen which Joseph had promised them for their new home, Israel sent Judah ahead to Joseph to tell him of their coming, and Joseph in his chariot went eagerly out to meet his father. When he met him, he fell on his neck, and the joy of father and son was too deep for words.

Joseph brought his father to Pharaoh, and Israel blessed Pharaoh and went back to his home.

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee. The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell."

So Joseph gave his family rich lands for their home and saw that they were cared for as long as the famine lasted. Pharaoh grew very rich in these years when every one, far and near, came to him to buy grain.

As the years went by, and each year the Egyptians bought food, at last the time came when they had spent all their money, and still there were two years of famine ahead. Not knowing what to do, the people came to Joseph.

"The money faileth," they said. "*Give* us bread, for why should we die in thy presence?"

"Give your cattle," answered Joseph, "and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail."

So all that year they used their cattle for money to buy grain from Pharaoh,

and at the end of the year their cattle were gone as well as their money. The next year, therefore, they came to Pharaoh and offered to sell their work and their land to Pharaoh in return for grain to plant and to eat. Joseph agreed to buy up the whole country for Pharaoh, except the land of the priests, for the priests were fed by the king. This was the last year of the famine.

"Behold," said Joseph, "I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh. Lo, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land, and it shall come to pass that in the increase ye shall give the fifth part to Pharaoh and four parts shall be your own seed in the field and for your food."

"Thou hast saved our lives," the Egyptians answered, "and we will be Pharaoh's servants."

So after that there was a tax on the land for Pharaoh of one-fifth. When the famine came to an end, Israel and his sons and their families still lived in Egypt for seventeen years, and then Israel, feeling that his days were numbered, made Joseph swear to bury him in the cave of Macpelah with his father Isaac, his mother Rebekah, and his wife Leah. When Joseph had promised this, he took his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, for their grandfather's blessing, leading Manasseh, the elder, so that Israel's right hand would fall upon his head and he should receive the blessing of the first-born. But Israel put his right hand on Ephraim's head.

"Not so, my father," protested Joseph; "this is the first-born."

"I know it, my son, I know it," Israel answered. "He also shall be great, but his younger brother shall be greater than he. God Almighty appeared to me at Bethel in Canaan and blessed me, saying, 'I will make of thee a multitude of people and will give this land to thy descendants after thee for an everlasting possession.' And now," Israel went on, "thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon they shall be mine; behold I have given thee one portion above thy brethren. God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers."

Then Israel died, and was mourned forty days. When the days of mourning were over, Joseph asked permission of Pharaoh to take his father's embalmed body back to Canaan to be buried in the cave of Macpelah.

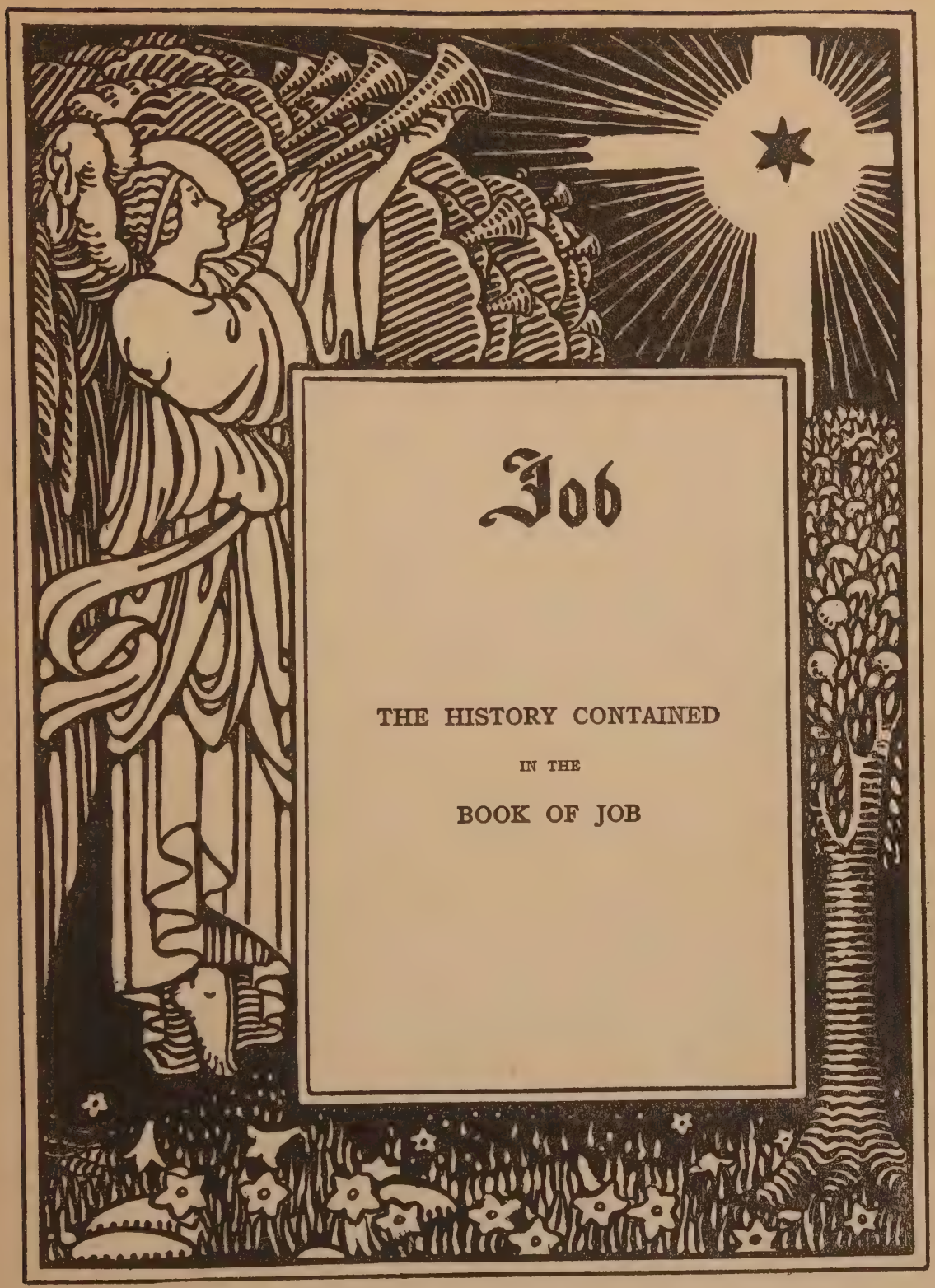
"Go up," Pharaoh answered, "and bury thy father, even as he made thee swear."

Pharaoh sent with Joseph a long procession of his servants to do honor to Israel, and all of Israel's sons went too. It was a very great company that carried Israel back to Hebron and buried him with his family in the cave of Macpelah. Then Joseph and his brethren went back to Egypt.

Now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers were afraid that Joseph would call to mind again the evil they had done him years before. But Joseph had no such thought.

"Fear not," he said. "Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good. I will nourish you and your little ones."

Comforted, his brothers went back to their homes in Goshen, and there they lived year after year in peace and plenty. Finally, when Joseph had lived to hold on his knees the grandchildren of Ephraim and Manasseh, he too died one hundred and ten years old. Like his father, he asked that he might be buried in Canaan, but his body was embalmed and put in a coffin in Egypt.



Job

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE

BOOK OF JOB

Chapter I—THE PATIENCE OF JOB

IN the land of Uz, placed somewhere between Egypt and the Euphrates River, there lived about this time a man named Job who, with his family of seven sons and three daughters, was prosperous and honored and upright because, like Abraham, he listened to the voice of God.

Job was a very rich man, but he counted his riches in cattle instead of dollars. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred asses. He had many men to take care of his flocks and herds, so that he was one of the greatest of the men of the East at that time.

Job's family was happy together, and Job had tried to bring up his sons and daughters to be good men and women. He prayed for them daily and offered sacrifices for them, for in those days when there were no special priests, the head of the house offered the burnt offering.

Then one day while Job and his family were secure in their comfort and material riches, the spirit of evil, called Satan, appeared in the kingdom of heaven.

"Whence comest thou?" asked the Lord, of Satan.

"From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it," Satan answered.

"There is in the earth," said the Lord, "none like mine servant Job. He is a perfect and upright man; one that feareth God and escheweth evil."

"Doth Job fear God for naught?" Satan asked with a sneer. "Hast Thou not made a hedge about him? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to thy face."

"Behold," spoke the Lord, "all that he hath is in thy power." For the Lord knew Job's heart and knew that there was something there that Satan could not touch.

Then Job's troubles began. His oldest son was entertaining his brothers and sisters at a merry-making while Job sat at home with his wife. Suddenly a man came running to Job with a frightened message.

"The oxen were plowing," he gasped, "and the asses feeding beside them,

when the men of Sheba fell upon them and took them away; yea, they have slain thy servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

While he was speaking another messenger came in. "Fire is fallen from heaven," he said, "and hath burned up the sheep and the servants, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

Before he had ended, a third messenger appeared. "The Chaldeans," he exclaimed, "made out three bands and fell upon the camels and have carried them away and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped to tell thee."

And then came still another messenger. "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating in their eldest brother's house, and behold there came a great wind from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house and it fell, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

Deprived of all he most loved and valued on earth, Job did not curse God, though sorrowfully he sat down in mourning for his family.

Then again Satan entered the kingdom of heaven.

"From whence comest thou?" asked the Lord.

"From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it," Satan answered.

"Hast thou considered my servant Job," asked the Lord, "that there is none like him in the earth? A perfect and an upright man that feareth God and escheweth evil. And still he holdeth fast his integrity."

Though Satan had destroyed all Job's earthly possessions, he had not touched Job personally. Now he thought that if he could lay disease upon Job then Job certainly would curse God.

"Skin for skin," Satan answered. "Yea all that a man hath will he give for his life. Touch his bone and his flesh and he will curse Thee to Thy face."

"Behold he is in thine hand," answered the Lord again.

Then to Job came a grievous illness that covered him with irritating boils and sent him away from his home out to sit in the fields alone, for people were afraid of him.

"Curse God and die," his wife said to him; but Job, knowing that it is "the things which are not seen" which are eternal, had no thought but of love for his God.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," was his sustaining thought.

There have been many martyrs since Job that have been carried through their trials by just that same understanding and dependence upon God.

Three friends of Job heard of Job's suffering and came to him where he

"AND SUDDENLY TO JOB HIS TRIALS SEEMED AS NOTHING, FOR HE SAW THAT THEY HAD BROUGHT HIM NEARER TO GOD"

sat to comfort him. All of them assured Job that he must have been very wicked to have such troubles come upon him.

"How long will ye vex my soul and break me in pieces with words?" Job asked. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

And suddenly to Job his trials seemed as nothing, for he saw that they had brought him nearer to God and to a closer understanding of Him.

Then health came back to Job; his brothers and sisters brought him gifts to start him in life again, and other children were born to him—again seven sons and three daughters. The daughters' names were Jemima, Kezia and Keren-happuch. His riches were greater than ever, for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, ten thousand yoke of oxen and one thousand asses. But more than all his material possessions, he valued his new knowledge of God and a new realization that spiritual blessings counted far above the material.

And we do not read that Satan went back again to the kingdom of heaven.

Moses

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE BOOKS OF

EXODUS · LEVITICUS · NUMBERS

DEUTERONOMY

Chapter I—MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES

FTER the death of Joseph the Children of Israel and their descendants lived for many years in Egypt under one king after another till at last there was on the throne a Pharaoh who had never heard of Joseph and who felt no affection for Joseph's kinspeople. When this Pharaoh, on ascending the throne, saw that both in numbers and in wealth the Israelites had increased enormously, fearing lest they might rise and overpower Egypt, he thought it time to put them under some sort of control.

"Behold," he said, "the people of the children of Israel are more and are mightier than we."

Pharaoh therefore divided the Israelites into companies and set them at hard labor, working in the fields or manufacturing bricks, with Egyptian overseers to direct them. These taskmasters were very severe and made the life of the Israelites a burden, but in spite of it, the Israelites increased.

When the king saw that the number of the Israelites was growing bigger all the time, he made a decree that every boy baby that was born to the Jews should be thrown into the river and drowned. But the Egyptian nurses who cared for the mothers and babies liked the Jewish women and helped them hide the little boys instead of killing them.

There were among the Israelites in the tribe of Levi a man named Amram and his wife Jochabed. When Pharaoh's law was made they already had two children, a little girl named Miriam and a little boy named Aaron, and after Pharaoh had made his edict to kill all the Jewish boy-babies, when Aaron was three years old, another son was born to Amram and Jochabed; he was a sturdy little boy and all the family loved him. For three months they managed to hide him from Pharaoh's officers, but then the danger grew too great, and Jochabed thought of another possible way to save her baby.

The royal decree was that the babies should be thrown into the Nile. Jochabed went down to the river, gathered some rushes and dug up some clay and then out of the rushes plaited a cradle which she made watertight with clay and pitch. When the little ark was done, she gave her baby a last kiss, tucked him snugly into his new bed, breathed a prayer that God would protect him, and then carried the

box to the shallows of the river where Pharaoh's daughter used to bathe, and set it afloat among the bulrushes. Leaving little Miriam standing where she could watch what happened to her brother, Jochabed went home to pray again to God.

Miriam, watching, held her breath as the princess and her ladies came finally down to the river's brink. The baby in the bulrushes was crying and Pharaoh's daughter heard the sound. Then looking round she saw the floating basket and sent one of her maidens to bring it to her. When it was opened, there lay the crying baby.

"This is one of the Hebrew's children," said the princess, and when she saw what a beautiful, sturdy child it was she loved it and made up her mind to keep it.

Then Miriam came close. "Shall I go," she asked the princess, "and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women?"

"Go," answered Pharaoh's daughter, and off sped Miriam to her mother and brought her hurrying to the river bank.

"Take this child away and care for it for me," said the princess, "and I will give thee thy wages."

Pharaoh's daughter named the boy Moses, and when he was old enough he went to live with her in the royal palace.

When Moses was a man he went out one day into the fields where his countrymen were toiling and saw the taskmaster strike one of the Hebrews. Moses' anger rose when he saw one of his race so ill-treated, and he fell on the Egyptian and killed him.

The next day when he went out, he found one Jew attacking another Jew, and again Moses interfered.

"Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?" he asked.

The Jew turned on Moses. "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" he asked roughly. "Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?"

A great fear came to Moses. "Surely this thing is known," he murmured to himself and crept away home.

The news was not long in coming to Pharaoh's ears. He ordered Moses' death because Moses had slain an Egyptian. But Moses, escaping him, fled to the land of Midian.

"WHEN PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER OPENED THE BASKET, THERE LAY A CRYING BABY"

Chapter II—THE BURNING BUSH

MOSES, fleeing for his life, came to the land of Midian and sat down by a well for rest after his hurried journey. As he sat there the seven daughters of Jethro, the priest of Midian, came down to water their father's flocks at the well.

They drew up water and filled the troughs, but when they tried to bring up the sheep and cattle to drink, a band of rough shepherds drove them back and let their own flocks drink the water that the girls had drawn. Moses, indignant, drove back the shepherds' beasts and kept them off until Jethro's flocks were watered and the girls had gratefully driven them home.

Jethro was surprised to see his daughters so soon, for usually they had to await the shepherds' pleasure.

"How is it that ye are come so soon to-day?" he asked.

"An Egyptian delivered us out of the hands of the shepherds," they answered, "and also drew water enough for us and watered the flock."

"And where is he?" reproved their father. "Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."

They went back for Moses, whom they thought an Egyptian, and brought him to their home. Jethro broke bread with him and bade him stay with them, and finally gave him one of his daughters, Zipporah, for a wife.

So Moses, like his forefathers Isaac and Jacob, found his wife at a well in the desert.

For many years Moses dwelt in Midian and helped his father-in-law with the flocks, as Jacob had helped Laban his father-in-law, until the Pharaoh that Moses knew died and in his place there came to the throne another Pharaoh who was still more harsh to the Israelites. He doubled their tasks and punished them when they failed, until the Israelites cried to God for help.

And always when the children of Israel turned again to God, He sent them a deliverer.

Moses, driving Jethro's flocks one day to the far side of the desert in search of pasture, had gone as far as Mt. Horeb. There, as his sheep fed, Moses sat quite alone, thinking probably of Egypt and of the oppressed Hebrew people who were the Egyptians' slaves. It seemed as if God had forgotten his chosen people whom, to Abraham and to Isaac and again to Israel, He had promised to make a powerful nation.

As he sat deep in thought, Moses' attention was caught by a bush in the distance. It was on fire. Moses straightened up and looked more closely. The bush was certainly on fire and yet it did not burn up.

"I will now turn aside," Moses said to himself, "and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

So he arose and went close to the bush and, as he reached it, the Lord's voice came from the burning bush.

"Moses! Moses!" spoke the voice.

"Here am I," Moses answered in awe.

"Draw not hither," came the voice again. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt, for all the men are dead that sought thy life."

Moses had hidden his face as he listened to the word of the Lord, and now he trembled as he heard of the mission before him. He was afraid to go back to Egypt and face the king.

"Who am I," Moses answered, "that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

"Certainly I will be with thee," comforted the voice, "and this shall be a token that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain."

But that time looked very far distant to Moses, and he still did not think that the children of Israel would believe that God had sent him to be their deliverer.

"When I shall come to the children of Israel," he asked, "and shall say unto them, 'The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you,' and they shall say unto me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say unto them?"

And God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I AM hath sent me. And they shall hearken unto thy voice."

"But," objected Moses, "they will not believe me; they will say, 'The Lord hath not appeared to thee.' "

"What is that in thine hand?" asked the voice.

"A rod," answered Moses.

"Cast it on the ground," commanded the Lord, and when Moses obeyed, his staff changed into a fiery serpent and Moses ran from it.

"Put forth thy hand and catch it by the tail," came the command. And the snake became once more only a shepherd's staff.

"Put now thy hand into thy bosom," said the Lord.

Moses put his hand beneath his robe and drew it out white with leprosy. Then while he feared, there came the command to put it in his bosom again, and this time he drew it out restored to health.

"It shall come to pass," said the Lord, "that if they will not believe the first sign, they will believe the latter sign."

But still Moses feared the task that the Lord had set him.

"O my Lord," he begged, "I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since Thou hast spoken unto thy servant."

"Who hath made man's mouth?" asked the Lord. "Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say. Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well, and behold he cometh forth to meet thee, and thou shalt speak unto him, and he shall be thy spokesman unto the people, and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand wherewith thou shalt do signs."

The voice ceased and Moses, rising to his feet, his heart filled with God's solemn message, gathered his sheep together and started out to fulfill his great mission.

Chapter III—THE TEN PLAGUES

HEN Moses had brought the flocks from Mt. Horeb back to the fold, he sought out Jethro.

"Let me go, I pray thee," he said to Jethro, "and return to my brethren which are in Egypt and see whether they be yet alive."

"Go in peace," answered Jethro.

So with his wife and children on asses, Moses started back to the land of Egypt from which he had fled for his life many years before; for Moses, in spite of his fear, obeyed the voice of God.

The voice of the Lord had come to Aaron also in Egypt, telling him to go up toward Midian to meet Moses. He too obeyed, and somewhere in the wilderness the two brothers met and kissed each other joyfully after their long parting. Moses

told to Aaron all that God had spoken to him from the burning bush, and together they carried the message to the elders of Israel.

The Israelites, all the tribes which were called for Israel's sons—Reuben and Simeon, Levi and Judah, Issacher and Zebulon, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher, Ephraim and Manasseh (two tribes instead of one for Joseph's share), and last of all the tribe of Benjamin—all listened to Aaron's words and saw Moses' signs and believed that the Lord had spoken. In their gratitude for deliverance, they bowed their heads and worshiped God.

This first part of their task accomplished, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh to demand that he should let the Israelites go as the Lord had commanded.

"Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?" answered Pharaoh contemptuously. "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, keep the people from their work?"

And, instead of letting the Israelites go, Pharaoh laid on them heavier burdens. He made a decree that no straw should be given them for their brick-making; that they must find the straw themselves, and still they must make just as many bricks in a day as when the straw was furnished them.

"They be idle," declared Pharaoh. "Therefore they say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' Let there be more work laid upon the men and let them not regard vain words."

The taskmasters obeyed Pharaoh, driving the Israelites to their tasks and insisting that as many bricks as ever should be turned out, though now, instead of having good straw furnished them, the Israelites had to take time to hunt around the fields for whatever poor stubble they could find. The Israelites were in despair.

"Wherefore dealest thou so with thy servants?" they cried to Pharaoh.

"Ye are idle; ye are idle," he repeated. "Therefore ye say, 'Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.' "

So the Israelites, finding instead of the deliverance which they had expected, only worse persecution, turned on Moses and Aaron and reproached them. Moses in turn carried their complaint to the Lord.

"Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people?" he cried. "Since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name he hath done evil to this people, neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all."

Moses had not yet learned the trust and patience he was to gain by his long journey through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan, but the Lord's words comforted him nevertheless.

"Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh," the Lord said, "for with a

strong hand shall he let them go. I am the Lord. I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob, and I have established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan. And I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and I will bring you in unto the land concerning which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, and I will give it to you for an heritage. I am the Lord.' "

Moses carried his message to the Israelites, but they were under such cruel bondage that that seemed much more real to them than any promise of future deliverance, and they turned deaf ears to Moses' voice. Moses, discouraged, was afraid to go again to Pharaoh.

"How shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?" he asked. But still, as before when the Lord had commanded him, Moses obeyed. First he sent his wife and sons to Jethro for safety and then, carrying the rod, the two brothers went once more to demand from Pharaoh their people's freedom.

But Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he would not listen. Even when Aaron cast down his rod and it became a serpent as it had on Mt. Horeb, Pharaoh was not convinced. He called his own magicians and they too did marvels. Aaron stretched his rod out over the river and turned the water to blood, so that the fishes died and people had to dig new wells to get water fit for drinking; but still Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go.

Then the Lord spoke again to Moses. "Go unto Pharaoh and say unto him, 'Let my people go. And if thou refuse to let them go, I will smite all thy borders with frogs.' "

Pharaoh listened and refused. But when Aaron stretched forth his rod over the rivers and ponds and up from them came a plague of frogs that covered the whole land and filled the houses, Pharaoh, frightened, sent quickly for Moses and Aaron.

"Entreat the Lord that He take away the frogs, and I will let the people go."

"When shall I entreat for thee?" asked Moses.

"To-morrow," answered Pharaoh.

"Be it according to thy word," answered Moses, "that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God. The frogs shall depart from thy houses; they shall remain in the river only."

It happened as Moses said. The frogs died in heaps, till it was scarcely possible to get rid of them. But because they were dead, Pharaoh feared them no more, and quickly forgot his promise.

Once more Aaron stretched out his rod, and everywhere through Egypt vermin appeared. But Pharaoh would not let Israel go. Then the rod brought swarms of flies over the land. The flies were not in Goshen where the children of Israel lived, only in the houses of the Egyptians. It was a terrible plague, and again Pharaoh called for Moses.

"I will let you go that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness," he said. "Only ye shall not go very far away. Entreat for me."

But when Moses had entreated again for the removal of the flies, Pharaoh changed his mind and would not let the people go. And there came a plague on the Egyptian cattle, which did not touch the herds of the Israelites. And next came boils upon all the Egyptians, and after that came a furious hail-storm that beat down the crops, and lightning that set fire to their barns, so that all the flax and barley were destroyed throughout Egypt. The wheat and rye escaped because they were not yet grown. Then, as Pharaoh's heart was still hardened, down over the land came a swarm of locusts, so thick that they darkened the sun, and the locusts devoured all that the storm had left. But in Goshen the crops were not touched by storm or by locust.

By this time the Egyptians were grumbling against their king. "Let the men go that they may serve the Lord their God," they demanded. "Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?"

Pharaoh was ready to listen to this complaint, but he thought, too, that in yielding he might drive a bargain with Moses.

"Go, ye that are men, to serve the Lord," he said. "Yet not your little ones."

"We will go with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds," answered Moses firmly.

When Pharaoh heard that, he drove Moses and Aaron out of his presence and refused his consent to the departure of the Israelites.

Then for three days darkness fell upon the land, so thick that no one could see. The people were afraid to walk about, so while it lasted they stayed in their places. But in spite of the Egyptian darkness, in Goshen it was light.

In his fear of the darkness, Pharaoh yielded one more point. "Go ye, serve the Lord," he said, "let your little ones go with you; only let your flocks and your herds stay."

"Our cattle shall go with us," Moses answered. "There shall not a hoof be left behind."

"Get thee from me," cried Pharaoh in anger. "See my face no more lest thou die."

"WITH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB EACH MAN WAS TO MAKE A MARK, THAT THE ANGEL OF DEATH MIGHT PASS OVER EVERY HOUSE SO MARKED"

"Thou hast spoken well," Moses answered calmly. "I will see thy face again no more."

But though Pharaoh hated Moses, Pharaoh's subjects admired and liked the Jewish leader. They were glad to let the Israelites go and to help them with presents on their departure. The Israelites took them as the only wages they would be likely to get for their years of toil in Egypt.

Moses made his last proclamation. "Thus saith the Lord," he said, "About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout the land of Egypt such as there was none like it nor shall be any again."

But when the word came to Pharaoh, he scorned it.

Meanwhile Moses was giving instructions to the Israelites. Each family of every tribe in the evening of the fourteenth day of the month was to take a lamb without blemish and kill it and prepare it for eating. With the blood of the lamb each man was to make a mark beside his outer door that the angel of death, when he went through Egypt, might *pass over* every house so marked. When that was done, the Israelites were to pack their goods, including the presents the Egyptians had given them, dress for their journey, and then sit down to eat their roasted lamb served with herbs and unleavened bread. This feast on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan was after this to be forever the great Jewish Feast of the Passover, for this going out of Egypt started for the Hebrews a new national life as God's peculiar people whom He would lead back out of slavery to the land of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Their new year began with their new life on the fourteenth day of Nisan, which is our April.

"And it shall come to pass," Moses ended his instructions, "when your children shall say unto you, 'What mean ye by this service?' that ye shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel when he smote the Egyptians."

The people listened and obeyed. Sure now that their slavery was over, they made ready for their journey and then, after they had marked their door-posts, sat down to their last supper.

As they ate solemnly and filled with awe, out of the dark there arose a great cry from Egypt, for there not a house was without mourning. Pharaoh's son died and at last, stricken to the heart, the king sent for Moses and Aaron, although it was the middle of the night.

"Rise up," he commanded hastily, "and get you forth from among my people,

both ye and the children of Israel. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone. And bless me also."

At once the hurry and bustle commenced. Sheep and cows were gathered together; asses were saddled to carry the women and children; farewells were said; last presents received and stowed away in the packs; and then Moses remembered Joseph's coffin which had never been carried to Macpelah as he had asked, and that was added to the caravan. In the dark it started forth, cattle lowing, children crying, men shouting, as the children of Israel went out of Egypt. It had been many years since God had promised the childless Abraham that his descendants should be a great nation, and now, after four hundred and thirty years of life in a strange country, a nation indeed thousands strong was starting out to find the promised land.

Chapter IV—THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

THE nearest way to Canaan from Egypt was along the southern shore of the Mediterranean and up the Philistine country through Gerar and Beer-sheba, where Abraham and Isaac had lived. But the Philistines were a fierce nation, and the Jews, weakened by their years of bondage and hampered by their families and their cattle, were not in fighting trim. If their way had been disputed on the second or third days' journey, they would probably have all turned back to Egypt in discouragement. Moses therefore went further south and led his host toward the Sinai Peninsula. They must cross an arm of the Red Sea to get into the Peninsula, but that would be easier than facing the Philistines.

They set out southward on their journey through the wilderness, and to get away from Pharaoh as soon as possible they marched day and night, stopping only long enough to rest. Pharaoh had changed his mind so often that it was almost certain that he would change once more and do all in his power to prevent their getting away.

As the Israelites went, the Lord pointed out to them their course, moving before them by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire. There was no chance of going wrong if they followed the Lord. Finally the Israelites came in view of the Red Sea, and there the pillar of cloud halted and Moses knew that the host was to camp there and rest before crossing the sea into the Sinai Peninsula, which is part of Arabia.

Meanwhile back in Egypt Pharaoh had again hardened his heart as the Israelites had expected. As soon as Moses was gone, Pharaoh forgot his fear and thought only how foolish he had been to let so great a nation escape him so easily.

"Why have we done this," he asked, "that we have let Israel go from serving us?"

Immediately he made up his mind to go after them and bring them back. He chose six hundred of his best chariots and set captains over them and with all his horse and foot started out to pursue the Israelites. Just as they had encamped on the shore of the Red Sea he came up with them. The children of Israel, settling their camps, lifted up their eyes and saw the great host of Egyptians coming down upon them.

Instantly in their great fear the Hebrews forgot that the Lord had told Moses to lead them into the promised land; they forgot that He Himself was directing their way by day and by night; they forgot how their father Israel, when he was afraid in the wilderness, had found safety by turning to God in prayer. All that they did in their distress was to heap reproaches on Moses.

"Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" they cried. "Wherefore hast thou dealt so with us? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt saying, 'Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.' "

This was the beginning of the forty years of fault-finding with Moses that made him one of the most patient men in history. He met it now as he did through all the forty years ahead; he prayed to God, and God answered him.

"Wherefore criest thou unto me?" God said to Moses. "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. Lift thou up thy rod and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide the sea, and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."

"Fear ye not," Moses said to the children of Israel. "See the salvation of the Lord which He will show to you to-day, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

Then the cloud which showed the presence of the Lord moved from before the camp, where it had always been, to the rear of the camp, where it hung between the Israelites and the Egyptians, showing to the Israelites a bright, shining front, while to the Egyptians it was a heavy cloud that hid their foes from them and hindered their own progress, for in the darkness they could not see where to go.

Moses on the bank of the Red Sea, unseen to the Egyptians, stretched out his rod over the water, and immediately an east wind arose and raged violently all night, blowing back the waters till the dry ground appeared. Then in the early morning the Jewish host broke camp and, still hid from the Egyptians, took up their line of march across the dry bed of the Red Sea and reached the other side in safety.

At break of day, too, the Egyptians were astir. In spite of the cloud about them they advanced to attack the Jewish camp. But in the midst they went astray, their horses floundered into rough places which took off the wheels of the chariots, and they made slow progress. When at last they reached the camp, it was deserted, and the Israelites were safely across in the Sinai Peninsula on the far side of the sea. In confusion the Egyptian host prepared to follow them.

"Stretch out thy hand over the sea," commanded the Lord again to Moses.

And when Moses stretched forth his hand, the sea returned to its bed, overwhelming the Egyptians as it came.

"Let us flee from the face of Israel," they cried, "for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians."

They turned and tried to regain the shore they had left, but the waters were too quick for them. Caught in the overwhelming flood, they struggled in vain to reach land. Pharaoh and his horsemen and his footmen and his chariots—all were drowned in the Red Sea.

The Israelites, safe on the far shore, looked on in awe. Grateful for their own salvation, they feared the Lord and believed again that Moses was His servant and their deliverer. When Moses' sister, Miriam, seized a timbrel to make music and called unto them, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously," they all bowed their hearts in worship.

Chapter V—MANNA IN THE WILDERNESS

ITH that wonderful song Moses and Aaron and Miriam and all the children of Israel praised the Lord for their deliverance before they took up their march. Again they had to go out of their way to find a good road. Instead of going straight across the little peninsula, in order to avoid the desert they had to march south, down its west side to its point and then come north again along the east shore. Even this route was through something of a desert, and when, after three days' march

"MIRIAM SEIZED A TIMBREL AND CALLED UNTO THEM, 'SING YE TO THE LORD, FOR HE HATH TRIUMPHED GLORIOUSLY'"

the children of Israel had found no oases with springs and green pastures, they forgot how the Lord had triumphed gloriously and began to grumble. At the end of the third day they discovered a well, but when they drank the water and found it brackish, they broke out into open complaint.

"What shall we drink?" they cried to Moses rebelliously.

Moses, instead of quarreling with the people, asked the Lord for guidance, and God showed him the bark of a tree that sweetened the water. Ashamed of their faint-heartedness, the people, after they had drunk their fill, listened meekly to Moses.

"If thou wilt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God," Moses said to the multitude, "and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments—thus saith the Lord: 'I will put none of those diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee.' "

Eager again to obey when things were easy, the Israelites promised, and set out once more on their march. Presently they came to the oasis of Elim where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm-trees, and there in content they camped for rest and refreshment.

They could not stay too long in Elim, however, if they were to get to Canaan. Once more they took up their line of march down by the seashore through the wilderness of Sin toward Mt. Sinai. They had been journeying now a month and a half and, as provisions were growing short, the Israelites forgot their promise at Marah and once more began to doubt the Lord and murmur against Moses and Aaron.

"Would to God," they said to Moses, "we had died in the land of Egypt when we sat by the flesh-pots of Egypt and when we did eat bread to the full, for you have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Once more instead of answering railing with railing Moses asked God what he should do.

"Behold," answered the Lord, "I will rain bread from heaven for you and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day. On the sixth day it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. I will prove them whether they will walk in my law or no."

Then Moses turned to Aaron and said, "Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord, for He hath heard your murmurings. Your murmurings are not against us but against the Lord.' "

And as Aaron spoke these words to the Israelites, they, looking toward the pillar of cloud that was their guide, saw that even by day it was alight, for the glory of the Lord rested upon it. And out of the glowing cloud God spoke.

"I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel," He said. "At even ye shall eat flesh and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread. And ye shall know that I am the Lord your God."

The people listened in awe, and again believed. But as all that they wanted of God was personal comfort and safety, their faith in Him was not like "faithful Abraham's," deep and obedient, but shallow and selfish and ready to fret whenever things looked hard to them. For the present, however, they were content.

That evening a flock of quails came into the camp and the Israelites caught them—enough to make a meal for all. And in the morning when the dew had dried off, there on the ground lay a small, white, round thing like small hailstones, and when the people in curiosity tasted it, it was good for food.

"It is the promise," they said one to another, and the word for promise was *manna.*

"This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat," Moses assured them. "Gather it every man according to the number of your family; an omer for each man and for each of them which are in his tents."

Eagerly every one went to work to gather the five pints of manna which made the omer allowed to each. If they gathered more than one omer, the rest melted away and there was only the five pints left. When they had all gathered their allowance for the day the manna left on the ground melted too, and disappeared entirely. But the next morning there was a fresh supply.

"Let no man leave of what he has gathered till the next morning," Moses commanded.

Most of the people obeyed, but some ate only a part and laid away the rest for the next day, thinking they would save themselves the trouble of gathering a fresh supply. But when they went to their cupboard for breakfast, yesterday's manna had gone moldy and wormy and could not be eaten. Daily each man had to take his food from God's hand, except that on the day before the Sabbath they were allowed to get a double supply so that they need not work on their day of rest. That supply did not mold. Some of the Israelites thought that here, too, they could get along better by taking their own way and did not get the double portion on the sixth day. They had to go hungry, for on the morning of the Sabbath there was no grain of white manna on the ground. And so day by day God fed the people.

One omer of manna Moses laid away in a golden jar to be kept by the Israelites forever that their children in time to come might see how God had cared for their fathers in the wilderness. And that manna did not spoil.

Chapter VI—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

N down toward the toe of the Mt. Sinai Peninsula the children of Israel journeyed into the Midianite country where Moses had lived with his father-in-law Jethro. Again they found no oasis, and as they suffered for water for themselves and their flocks, again the Israelites turned against their brave leader.

"Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"

"What shall I do unto this people?" Moses cried unto the Lord, "for they be almost ready to stone me."

"Go on before the people," commanded the voice of the Lord, "and take with thee of the elders of Israel and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the sea, and take it in thy hand and go. Behold I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink."

Moses remembered then what God had said to him months before from the burning bush: "This shall be a token unto thee. When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain."

With the same staff in his hand which had been turned into a serpent when God had spoken to him before in this place, Moses went forward to Horeb, the mountain of the burning bush. When Moses had reached the rock to which the Lord guided him, he struck it with his staff, and immediately out gushed streams of fresh, pure water, enough to satisfy man and beast. And the ungrateful people drank.

While the Israelites camped here in Rephidim in Midian, the Amalekites, a fierce and warlike nation to the north, watched them in some alarm, not liking to see such a powerful nation close to their borders. Fearing an invasion, the Amalekites decided to attack the Israelites and destroy them in their camp at Rephidim.

Moses spoke to Joshua, a young man who had already proved his courage and wisdom.

"Choose us out men," Moses said, "and go out; fight with Amalek. To-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand."

Joshua chose the best warriors of Israel to repel the Amalekites. When the attack came, Moses, as he had said, went up into the mountain and stretched his hands to God in prayer. So long as his hands were outspread Israel repulsed its foe, but when Moses' hands fell heavy at his sides Amalek prevailed. Aaron, when he saw this, seated Moses on a large stone, and he on one side and Hur on the other held up Moses' hands until the sun dropped below the horizon and Amalek fled before the swords of Joshua and his army.

Grateful for the victory, Moses and Aaron and Hur came down from the mountain and all the Israelites settled for a rest in the camp in Midian that had so nearly been taken from them.

The Israelites could not come so near Jethro without his knowing of their being there. Glad to hear of their escape from Egypt and of their victory over Amalek, Jethro took Moses' wife and her two sons and came down to the Jewish camp. After the greetings were over, Jethro went with Moses to his tent to learn about all that had happened since they parted. Moses told him about Pharaoh and the plagues and the Passover and the Red Sea and the grumblings of the Israelites and about the victory over the Amalekites.

"Blessed be the Lord," exclaimed Jethro, "who hath redeemed the people from under the hand of the Egyptians."

Then Jethro offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and all the elders came together and Jethro and Moses and Aaron dined with them.

Jethro went back to Midian, but he left his son Hobab in the Israelitish camp. The camp was soon broken up again, for the children of Israel, who had now reached the southern point of the Sinai Peninsula, were ready to start north along its eastern coast. The line of march was taken up again and, guided by the pillar of fire and of cloud, the Jewish host reached Mt. Sinai in the third month of their coming out of Egypt. Here they made camp at a little distance from the foot of the mountain.

From Mt. Sinai the Lord spoke to Moses. He had brought the Jews out of Egypt to restore to them the land of their forefathers, and He was ready now to make with them a covenant as He had done with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

"Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel," the Lord said unto Moses, "Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagle's wings. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people."

"WHEN MOSES REACHED THE ROCK, HE STRUCK IT WITH HIS STAFF, AND IMMEDIATELY OUT GUSHED STREAMS OF FRESH, PURE WATER"

The children of Israel listened to Moses as he repeated these words and then with one voice they cried, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

The Lord told Moses how to make preparations for solemnizing this new covenant He was about to make with the people He had chosen.

"Lo," He said, "I come unto thee in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak with thee and believe thee forever. Go unto the people; sanctify them to-day and to-morrow and be ready against the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down in sight of all the people upon Mt. Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people, saying, 'Ye shall not go up into the mount or touch the borders of it, but when the trumpet soundeth long ye shall draw near to the mount."

The people received the message from Moses and for two days they sanctified themselves, making ready to listen to the commandments of the Lord. On the third day Mt. Sinai was covered with a thick cloud, quivering with lightning and sending out great thundering. Awestruck, the people waited the signal to approach. Loud and clear and long the trumpet sounded, and the reverent procession started and came in order to the base of Mt. Sinai. There they halted and did not touch the mountain, and while the trumpet still blew and the mountain quaked and the lightning played upon it, Moses received the Ten Commandments which God gave to His chosen people for their obedience; but the people, hearing the thunderings and the trumpet blasts and seeing the lightning and the smoking mountain, afraid, drew back from the mountain's foot.

"Speak thou with us," they begged Moses, "and we will hear, but let not God speak to us lest we die."

"Fear not," comforted Moses; but the people, terrified, would not listen nor would they come close to Mt. Sinai.

Moses left Aaron in charge of the camp and took Joshua with him as far as the foot of the mountain. There Moses left Joshua and went himself up into the cloud that covered the mountain, and abode there with God forty days and forty nights. The Ten Commandments were written on two tables of stone, but besides these there were many other laws told to Moses, and the building of the tabernacle as a church for the Jews was minutely described. Then the Lord confirmed His new covenant and let Moses depart.

But even in the forty days that Moses was gone the children of Israel had forgotten their new covenant with the Lord, and cried to Aaron for gods of silver or gold.

"Up, make us gods which shall go before us," they commanded, "for as for

"WHEN THEY HAD BROUGHT THEIR GOLD HE FASHIONED IT INTO THE LIKENESS OF A GOLDEN CALF, WHICH HE SET UP ON AN ALTAR"

this Moses, this man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

And Aaron, not brave enough to refuse, obeyed their wish.

"Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives and your daughters and bring them to me," he said.

And when they brought their gold he took it from them and fashioned it with a graving tool into the likeness of a golden calf, which he set up on an altar and gave to the children of Israel.

"These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt," cried the people who had just promised to obey the command "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."

The Lord, talking with Moses, perceived the sin of the Israelites on the plain.

"Go, get thee down," He said to Moses, "for thy people have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made them a molten calf and worshiped it. I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Let Me alone that I may consume them and I will make of *thee* a great nation."

"Turn from Thy fierce wrath," begged Moses for the people who had forgotten him. "Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom Thou swearest 'I will multiply you as the stars of heaven, and all the land that I have spoken of will I give unto your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' "

The Lord listened to Moses' prayer and Moses, carrying the two tables of stone on which were written the commandments, went down the mountain. At the foot Joshua was waiting for him.

"There is noise of war in the camp," Joshua said.

Moses listened. "It is not the voice of war but the noise of them that sing do I hear."

The two men came near to the camp, and Moses saw the altar and the golden calf and all the people dancing and singing in its worship. In despair, he cast down the tables of stone on the ground and they were broken.

In great indignation Moses came among the people. He rebuked Aaron and broke to pieces the golden calf and ground it to powder and scattered the powder over the water that the Israelites had to drink.

So completely had the people forgotten God that instead of being repentant they were ready to defy Moses. He took his station at the entrance of the camp.

"Who is on the Lord's side, let him come to me," he called aloud.

Only his own tribe, the tribe of Levi, came to Moses, their swords by their sides, and at Moses' order they advanced against the rebellious people. Almost

two thousand men were slain. Then sorrowfully Moses prayed to the Lord for forgiveness for the living, and they were spared.

Early in the morning Moses went once more up to the top of Mt. Sinai with two new tables of stone, and was there for forty days and wrote again the commandments on the tables of stone. So close did Moses get to God in this sojourn on Sinai that when he came down again his face shone with the glory, and Aaron and all Israel were afraid to come near to him.

Chapter VII—THE TABERNACLE

HEN Moses set to work to build the tabernacle whose pattern God had shown him on the mount. Moses had seen it there a perfect vision, and now, down in the valley, he must by patient, daily work make the vision a reality. The people listened to his words and came joyously to help him, for their hearts were stirred, and they gave generously of their time and substance. Both men and women brought jewels and gold, fine linen, dyes of blue and scarlet and purple, skins of sheep and goats and badger, silver and brass and wood, spice and oil and incense. The men who were skilled workers in metals or in wood gave their services, and the women who could spin and weave gave theirs. So all helped in the tabernacle.

This tabernacle was to be the Jews' church-building until they were fairly settled in their new land, so it must be made in parts and carried with them to be set up in their different camping places.

When the tabernacle was finished it was oblong in shape, about fifty-five feet long, eighteen wide and eighteen high, and the equivalent of almost a million dollars went to the making of it. At the entrance end on the east there were five wooden pillars overlaid with gold, on which by gold hooks was hung a costly curtain. The other three sides were of wood made in panels overlaid with gold, fitted together with sockets of silver.

Inside, the tabernacle was divided into two parts, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies, separated by gold pillars on which hung a curtain like that at the tabernacle entrance. Both these rooms were lined with curtains made either of dressed skins or of fine linen gorgeously embroidered in colors.

The tabernacle was set in a court one hundred and fifty feet long and seventy-five feet broad, marked off by brass pillars which supported on three sides curtains of white linen and on the east curtains embroidered in blue and purple

and scarlet. In the court the sacrifices were offered in the presence of the people.

The tabernacle, shut in by its curtains, its silver and gold flashing in the sun, stood at the west end of this court. About half-way between the tabernacle and the court entrance stood the golden laver where the priests cleansed themselves before they offered sacrifice; and still nearer the court entrance was the altar of burnt offering. The laver was made of the brass mirrors of the Hebrew women which they gladly gave. The altar, about seven feet square, was built of wood overlaid with brass, with brass horns at the corners, and rings of brass on its sides through which brass poles were slipped when the priests moved the altar. The utensils were all of brass. On this altar when the sacred fire was once lighted it was never allowed to go out. On the march, coals of the old fire were carried to light the new.

In the court by the altar of burnt offerings the people assembled for worship and the priests offered the sacrifices. Into the tabernacle itself only the priests might go, and they were allowed only in the Holy Place. Into the Holy of Holies the High Priest alone might pass, and he only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

In the Holy Place on the left stood a tall candlestick made of pure gold delicately worked and ornamented with almond flowers. It had three branches on each side of the main stem and thus held seven candles which lighted the Holy Place. Opposite the candlestick stood the table of shew-bread. The table was of wood covered with gold, like the altar furnished with rings and staves so that it might be carried when the Israelites marched. This table held the unleavened bread which was offered to the Lord every Sabbath day and which none but the priests might eat. In the middle of the Holy Place near the curtain which separated it from the Holy of Holies stood the altar of incense, smaller than the altar of burnt offerings but also built of wood covered with gold and with gold rings and staves. On it the priests burned incense every morning and evening.

Behind the altar of incense hung the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, sacred to the High Priest. In it stood the most sacred treasure that the Jews possessed—the ark of the covenant. The ark, built to contain the tables of stone on which were the commandments, and the gold jar that held the omer of manna, was about four feet long, made of wood covered without and lined within with gold and fitted with staves and rings. The ark was called the Mercy Seat and here throughout all the journeyings of the children of Israel dwelt God's presence—the angel that He had promised.

When God had in the beginning created man in His own image, man had communed with God without fear. But with Adam's disobedience came fear,

and then Adam's children began at once to offer sacrifices to God to atone for their sins. Then men offered sacrifices, too, of the best that they had to express their thanksgiving. Noah did it and Abraham and Israel; they all went directly to God with their prayers and their offerings and had no need of special priests.

But now with a tabernacle set aside for God's worship came the need of a priesthood. When God had on the night of the first Passover chosen the Jews for His special people and spared their eldest sons, He had said that the oldest son in each family should after that belong to Him to be His priest. Now, instead of taking the oldest sons in all the families of all the tribes, the law was changed, and one special tribe out of the twelve was chosen for the priesthood, leaving the other tribes free. Because the Levites had stood by Moses' side to help him when the camp rebelled at the destruction of the golden calf, the tribe of Levi was chosen for the priesthood and for the tabernacle service. They were to have no land given them in Canaan, but were always to be supported by the other tribes.

Jacob's son, Levi, had had three sons, Gershon, Kohath and Merari, so the Levites were divided into three parts, the Kohathites, the Gershonites and the Merarites. Because Moses and Aaron were descended from Kohath, the Kohathites were made priests, while the other Levites, the Gershonites and the Merarites were the helpers.

Aaron was made high priest of Israel and the office was to continue to his sons. From this time God would speak to His people through the high priest, as long as the high priest kept his ears open for God's word and did not get absorbed in merely the symbols of his office. In the tabernacle the high priest might pray to God as had Abraham in the open, and God would answer him. But Moses, like Abraham, was so pure of heart that God spoke directly to Moses as often as to Aaron the high priest.

The Feast of the Passover had been so far the only Jewish feast, but Moses ordained a second great day, the Day of Atonement, when the high priest should go into the Holy of Holies to beseech God's pardon for the sins of the people while they fasted in the camp, repenting their sins and renewing their minds for a better year ahead. On the Day of Atonement two goats were chosen; one was sacrificed, and the other, called the scapegoat, was allowed to escape into the wilderness carrying with it symbolically the sins of the people for the past year.

When the tabernacle was finished, its furniture placed, the Kohathites ordained as priests and the other Levites as their helpers, then the pillar of cloud and fire which had so far led the Israelites removed and settled over the tabernacle, abiding there and filling the Holy of Holies with the glory of the Lord.

Chapter VIII—THE NUMBERING OF THE TRIBES

AARON had four sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazer and Ithamar. Scarcely was the tabernacle established and its service instituted when Nadab and Abihu, priests at the altar, made on the altar of incense an offering of their own choosing instead of the offering ordered by the Lord, and the fire from the altar caught and devoured them. Thus Aaron was left with but two sons, Eleazer and Ithamar.

In the camp of the children of Israel the tabernacle stood in the center. At the east end stood the tents of Moses and Aaron, on the west the Gershonites, on the south the Kohathites. The Merarites were on the north. Behind Moses was the camp of Judah, consisting of Judah, Issachar and Zebulon, with their standard bearing a lion. To the north, behind the Merarites, Dan, Asher and Naphtali, made the camp of Dan, with an eagle on their standard. Opposite Judah was the camp of Ephraim—Ephraim, Menasseh and Benjamin, an ox on their standard. And on the south side was the camp of Reuben, consisting of Reuben, Simeon and Gad, on their standard a man.

It was a year now since the children of Israel had left Egypt, and they kept their first Passover in the wilderness. Then Moses numbered the tribes, counting all who were over twenty years old, and found that the camp contained six hundred and three thousand, three hundred and fifty-five souls. From each tribe Moses chose one wise man to represent the tribe and to work with him in governing Israel. When the tribes were numbered the cloud lifted from the tabernacle and Moses knew that it was time to start again on the journey to Canaan.

Hobab, the son whom Jethro had left behind, wanted now to leave Moses and go back to his own home. But Moses, realizing how valuable a man who knew the country would be as guide, persuaded him to stay and go on with them.

As the priests took down the tabernacle, Moses stood by with outstretched hands and prayed, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered." That was the prayer he always offered when the cloud moved from the tabernacle to lead the people forward.

The line of march was formed. The camp of Judah went first, and close after it the Gershonites with two wagons and four oxen carrying the curtains and hangings of the tabernacle. Next came the Merarites with four wagons and eight oxen carrying the boards and pillars and sockets of the tabernacle, and

THE SONS OF LEVI WENT AHEAD AND CARRIED THE ARK IN THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

behind them was the camp of Reuben. After Reuben, the Kohathites carried on their shoulders the sacred utensils of the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant under a purple canopy. By the time the Kohathites should arrive in the new camp, the Gershonites and Merarites ahead of them would have the tabernacle set up ready to receive the ark. The camp of Ephraim and the camp of Dan closed the line.

As they marched, the people, always looking back instead of forward, began again to grumble because they had left the fleshpots of Egypt. The manna when ground and baked made good bread, but the people, remembering only the plenty of Egypt and forgetting its bondage, arrived in camp in a state of discontentment. The tabernacle was set up and as the cloud settled once more upon it, Moses prayed, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." But though all the camp saw the presence of the Lord they did not cease their fault-finding.

"Who shall give us flesh to eat?" they fretted. "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all but this manna before our eyes."

As once before, the wind brought quails into the camp, but this time they came in thousands. The people gathered them eagerly to eat fresh what they could and to dry the rest. But before the meat was all eaten during the month, the people loathed it.

And now even Moses' own sister turned against him—Miriam, who had watched him in his little boat in the bulrushes.

"Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses?" she asked of Aaron. "Hath He not spoken also by us?"

And Aaron, who as high priest thought perhaps that he ought to rank Moses, listened to her.

From the tabernacle the Lord called Moses and Aaron and Miriam. "Come out, ye three, unto the tabernacle," He said.

When they had obeyed, the Lord, from the door of the tabernacle, singled out Miriam and Aaron. "Hear now my words," came the solemn voice. "If there be a prophet among you, I will make myself known to him in a vision, but with my servant Moses will I speak mouth to mouth. Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

When the voice ceased and the brothers looked at Miriam, behold, she was stricken with leprosy. Aaron in deep sorrow called upon Moses to pray for her, for he realized that Moses was nearer to God than he was.

"Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee," prayed Moses.

"Let her be shut out from the camp seven days," came the answer, "and after that let her be received in again."

So for seven days the camp was not moved, for the people waited for Miriam's healing. When she was well again, they packed the tabernacle and started up through the desert of Paran, which was the southern border of the land of Canaan, for now in their second year they had come close to their promised land.

Chapter IX—THE GRAPES OF ESHCOL

P closer and closer to Canaan the children of Israel drew and their minds must have been eager to know more of that land which had belonged to their forefathers and which held Shechem and Hebron and Bethel and Salem and Bethlehem, places made memorable by Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. They passed through Seir, which Esau's descendants still occupied, passed Mt. Hor and came finally to Kadesh-barnea, a city on the extreme boundary of Canaan, and there they camped.

Now that they were on the edge of their great adventure, Moses thought it wise to send explorers ahead up through the land to see what it was like and to bring him back a report, before the children of Israel advanced as a body. He chose one man from each tribe, but of the twelve scouts, the only two we remember are Joshua from the tribe of Ephraim and Caleb from the tribe of Judah. To the twelve Moses gave his charge.

"Get you up," he said, "and see the land, what it is, whether it be good or bad, fat or lean, whether there be wood thereon or not; and the people that dwellest therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what cities there be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds. And be ye of good courage. And bring of the fruit of the land."

The twelve men set out and came as far as Hebron, which had been Abraham's home; now it was filled with the Anakim—sons of giants—a race of tall men that struck terror to the hearts of the Hebrews. The Hebrews were not molested, however, and after they had explored the country, went back to camp carrying the fruit of the land as Moses had commanded—figs and pomegranates and a bunch of grapes so big that two men carried it between them on a stick. Perhaps those two were Caleb and Joshua, for they seem to have been the only stout hearts of the twelve. They called the valley where they got the grapes the valley of Eshcol.

Thus after forty days of exploration the twelve returned to Moses, ten of them fearful and cowardly, two of them sure that with God's help they could overcome all obstacles. When they reached Kadesh-barnea the eager hosts of Israelites crowded around them to hear their report.

"We came into the land whither thou sentest us," they said to Moses, "and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great, and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the south and the Hittites and Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains, and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by Jordan."

On hearing this doleful report the people of Israel set up a cry, but Caleb stilled it.

"Let us go up at once," he exclaimed, "and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it."

"We be not able to go up against the people," protested the faint-hearted ten. "They are stronger than we. All the men we saw were men of great stature; we saw there the giants—sons of Anak. And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so were we in their sight."

All their past sufferings seemed as nothing now in the eyes of the Israelites in anticipation of the fearful task that lay ahead of them. They had no ears for Caleb and Joshua; they listened only to the other ten and wept and wailed as they listened. All night they kept it up. No one slept.

And then, as usual, they blamed Moses. "Would God that we had died in Egypt," they cried, "or would God we had died in the wilderness. Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, and that our wives and children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return unto Egypt?"

And then in a growing tide of mutiny they said one to another, "Let us make a captain and return unto Egypt."

Unmoved by the panic and the mutiny, Moses bowed his head before all the host and prayed, while Caleb and Joshua rent their clothes in despair at the people's cowardice and called aloud to them until finally they gained attention.

"The land which we passed through to search it is an exceedingly good land," they cried. "Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land, for the Lord is with us. Fear them not."

The host cut them short with a renewed clamor, and there was this time a new cry coming with one voice.

"Stone them! Stone them!"

Suddenly at the door of the tabernacle appeared the presence of the Lord, and out of the cloud the voice of the Lord spoke.

"Because all these men have seen my miracles and have not hearkened to my voice, surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun; because they had another spirit and have followed Me fully, them will I bring into the land. And your little ones which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But you shall fall in the wilderness and all that were numbered among you from twenty years old and upward which have murmured against Me. To-morrow turn ye, and get ye into the wilderness. Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, after the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days. I the Lord have said. In the wilderness they shall be consumed and there shall they die."

So just at the gates of the promised land the Israelites' fear and lack of faith kept them out of it. They could have taken possession of it in a year if they had gone forward in obedience to God. Now they must turn back into the wilderness and wander thirty-eight years before they could even reach the borders of the land again. And of all the men who came out of Egypt only Caleb and Joshua should go into Canaan. The Lord had not destroyed the race of Israel, but it was the children who should inherit after their forty years of wandering; the fathers who had come out of Egypt would die in the wilderness.

With the sentence of their punishment in their ears the Israelites suddenly repented of their cowardice, and now, when it was too late, determined to go forward and conquer Canaan. Early in the morning a body of them gathered themselves together and came to Moses.

"Lo, we be here," they said, "and we will go up into the place which the Lord hath promised."

But God's command now was not to go forward but back into the wilderness, and the people knew it as well as Moses.

"Wherefore do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord again?" Moses asked. "It shall not prosper. Go not up lest ye be smitten before your enemies, for the Lord is not among you."

But the headstrong people would not listen. As foolhardy now as they had been cowardly the day before, they dashed alone against a foe whom they had been afraid to attack with the Lord's help. Moses and most of the repentant Israelites stayed in the camp, but the mutinous band climbed the hill to conquer Canaan.

Down upon them from all sides flowed their enemies, the Amalekites and

the Canaanites, and without the Lord to help them, the company of Israelites could not stand against them. Not one of them lived to return to the camp at Kadesh-barnea.

Chapter X—THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS OF JOURNEYING

HEN the people were humble again, the Lord told Moses that He would now show them openly by a sign whom He had chosen for high priest. Each tribe of Israel was to cut a rod and on it write the name of his tribe. On Levi's tribe, instead of the name of Levi, the name of Aaron the high priest should be written. Then the thirteen rods were to be laid by Moses before the ark of the covenant and left there all night.

"And it shall come to pass," said the Lord, "that the man's rod whom I shall choose shall blossom. I will make to cease the murmurings of the children of Israel."

Moses spoke through the camp the command of the Lord, and each tribe brought in its rod and Moses laid them all before the Lord in the Holy of Holies. In the morning when he brought out the rods again twelve looked just as they had when Moses took them, but the rod that bore Aaron's name had sent out buds and the buds grew to blossoms and the blossoms to almonds while they looked. They could no longer doubt that Aaron and his family were definitely chosen for the priesthood, for the rod that had budded was laid away with Aaron's name on it in the ark of the covenant along with the omer of manna and the Ten Commandments to be kept always as a witness to Israel.

The Israelites, impressed at last by the overthrow of their warriors by Amalek, and by the miraculous proof of Aaron's authority, melting into submission, broke up their camp and, turning their backs to the promised land, followed Moses from Kadesh-barnea back into the wilderness which it had taken them two years to traverse.

For thirty-eight long years now they traveled aimlessly, while all the men who had come out of Egypt died one by one and their sons grew to manhood. At the end of the thirty-eight years only Moses, Aaron, Caleb and Joshua remained of the thousands of men who had left Egypt with the caravan, and it was an entirely new band that Moses brought back once more to Kadesh-barnea. But the chil-

dren had learned from their fathers the trick of fault-finding, and Moses' forty years of leadership had not been easy years.

Back now at the entrance of the promised land, and thinking that his work was accomplished, Moses for the only time in his long, patient career lost his faith in God and his long-suffering kindness to the people. They lacked water in camp and, as their fathers had done, so the children blamed Moses for their suffering.

Moses and Aaron went to the door of the tabernacle and there the Lord spoke to them.

"Take the rod," said the word of the Lord, "and speak unto the rock before the eyes of the assembly and it shall bring forth water."

Filled with the promise, Moses took his rod and he and Aaron hastened back to the grumbling congregation, but as Moses saw the sullen faces a quick anger seized him.

"Hear now, ye rebels," he cried. "Must we fetch you water out of the rock?"

For the first time Moses had claimed the power for himself instead of giving it to God, and his punishment was severe, for because of it he could not enter into the land toward which for forty years he had led Israel. Aaron's sins and Miriam's also kept them out. Miriam died here and was buried at Kadesh-barnea.

The quickest entry from their present camp to Canaan lay through Edom, which was directly above them. To the king of Edom Moses sent messengers asking for passage across his land.

"We will not pass through the fields," Moses promised, "or through the vineyards. We will go by the king's highway and we will not turn to the right hand or to the left until we have passed thy borders. And if we or our cattle drink of thy water there, we will pay for it."

But to this courteous message the king of Edom sent back a gruff answer.

"Thou shalt not go through. Thou shalt not pass by me lest I come out against thee with the sword."

Not wishing a pitched battle if they could avoid it by taking a longer route, the Israelites turned southward again to skirt the lower boundary of Edom and came up above it on the east side of the river Jordon. On their march south they camped again at Mt. Hor, and here the Lord told Moses that Aaron should die.

"Take Aaron and Eleazer, his son, and bring them up into Mt. Hor," spoke the Lord. "And strip Aaron of his garments and put them upon Eleazer, his son. And Aaron shall be gathered unto his people and shall die here."

All the congregation of Israel knew of the command, and they watched with

sad faces as Aaron, who had been with them so long, left them for the last time. Moses and Aaron and Eleazer went up into the mountain as God commanded and there the sacred garments were put upon Eleazer and he became high priest. Moses and Eleazer came down alone, for Aaron had died on the mountain and had been buried there. For thirty days the Israelites mourned for Aaron.

Then striking camp, the Israelites went on, down into the wilderness to pass around Edom, and as they went they grumbled, for they were tired of the manna.

"There is no bread," they complained, "neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread."

When they settled in their next camp it was full of poisonous snakes. Many of the Hebrews died of the bites and those who lived fled in panic to Moses to pray for them.

"Make thee a fiery serpent and set it on a pole," came the word of the Lord in answer to Moses' prayer, "and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten when he looketh upon it shall live."

Moses made a serpent of brass and placed it high in the sight of the camp, and every one who had faith to look on it was healed and the snakes bit him no more.

From the lower border of Edom the children of Israel turned north and journeyed along the eastern border of Edom until they came to the Land of Moab, where lived the descendants of Lot. Here, as in Seir among Esau's descendants, the Lord told the children of Israel to march peaceably and pay for what they ate and drank. Beyond Moab lay the Amorites under their king Sihon, and beyond Sihon was Bashan with Og for its king. Og was a giant; his iron bedstead was six feet broad and twelve feet long.

Moses sent to Sihon the same message he had sent to the king of Edom, and Sihon answered it as roughly as had Edom's king. More than that, he gathered his armies and attacked the Israelites. But God was with the Children of Israel and they were moved with such courage that they beat back the Amorites and defeated them and took their cities.

Strong after this victory, the Israelites were not even afraid of the giant Og. Boldly they marched through the conquered Amorite country up to Bashan and gave battle to its king. Here too they were victorious. Og, the giant, was killed, the children of Israel took possession of his lands, and their fame ran through the countryside in all directions.

Chapter XI—BALAAM AND HIS ASS

AT first the nations would not believe that an unknown tribe could come up from the south and overthrow the powerful kingdoms of Sihon and Og, but when they were convinced that it was true they trembled.

Although the children of Israel had no quarrel with the Moabites and had not troubled their land, nevertheless when they camped on its borders, Balak, king of Moab, wished they were farther away. Thinking that magic was helping the children of Israel and that he might defeat them by more magic, he sent some of his Moabitish princes to one of his chief magicians named Balaam. Though Balaam was now a magician of a heathen king, he was descended from Shem, Noah's son. He knew something about the Hebrew God and he knew that these Israelites were God's people.

Balak's messengers came to Balaam with presents in their hands.

"Behold," they said, "thus saith Balak: 'There is a people come out from Egypt and behold they cover the face of the earth and they camp over against me. Come now, I pray thee. Curse me this people; peradventure I shall prevail that I may drive them out of the land, for I know that whom thou blessest is blessed and whom thou cursest is cursed.' "

"Lodge here this night," Balaam answered the messengers, "and I will bring you word again as the Lord shall speak unto me."

The men stayed. That night the Lord spoke to Balaam.

"What men are these with thee?"

"Balak hath sent unto me," Balaam answered, "saying, 'There is a people come out of Egypt. Curse me them.' "

"Thou shalt not go," commanded the Lord. "Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed."

Though Balaam had had many valuable presents from Balak and would have liked well to get this present that the princes of Moab had for him if he would curse Israel, he dared not disobey the voice of the Lord. When the morning dawned and the princes came for their answer to Balak's message, Balaam told them regretfully that he could not go with them.

"The Lord refuseth to give me leave," he said.

The messengers, with their present still in their hands, went back to Balak.

"Balaam refuseth to come with us," they reported.

Then Balak, thinking that Balaam was waiting for a larger present, chose even greater princes as his messengers and sent them to Balaam.

"Thus saith Balak," they announced. "'Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming to me. I will promote thee to very great honor. I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me. Come, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.'"

"If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold," Balaam answered, "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord to do less or more." But he did not stop there. It was hard to give up so easily all that Balak promised, and Balaam hoped in spite of God's word he might yet in some way be able to get it. "Tarry ye also here this night," he added, "that I may know what the Lord will say unto me now." But he knew quite well what the Lord had already said.

And yet that night the Lord, seeing that Balaam's obedience was from fear and not from love, bade him go with the men. Thinking his troubles were over and that he could serve both God and mammon, Balaam happily saddled his ass early in the morning and went with the princes of Moab.

The princes and their cavalcade rode together ahead of Balaam and his servants. As Balaam followed on his ass, wondering if he could obey the Lord and still get Balak's gift, suddenly his ass swerved out of the road and before Balaam could stop her she had carried him far across a field into a vineyard with a narrow pathway between two walls. Balaam with a hasty blow tried to turn her back into the road, but she refused to go. The ass had seen what Balaam was too blind to perceive; an angel of the Lord with drawn sword standing across the path.

When Balaam could not turn his beast he tried to make her go forward, but the angel had followed across the field and now stood in the path ahead. The ass, trying to pass without touching the angel, pushed so hard against the wall that she crushed Balaam's foot and made him so angry that he struck her a second blow.

Once more the angel removed and went ahead to a place that was so narrow that only one person could pass at a time. Here again the ass saw the angel with the drawn sword, and knowing that it was impossible to get by, she lay down. And Balaam, dismounting, in his anger beat the ass still harder.

Then to Balaam's amaze his ass spoke to him. "What have I done unto thee that thou hast smitten me three times?" she asked.

"Because," Balaam answered, "thou hast mocked me. I would I had a sword in mine hand for now would I kill thee."

"Am I not thine ass upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day?" asked the beast. "Was I ever wont to do so unto thee?"

"'WHEREFORE HAST THOU SMITTEN THINE ASS THREE TIMES?' DEMANDED THE ANGEL, WHILE BALAAM FELL FLAT ON HIS FACE"

"Nay," answered Balaam, and as he spoke his eyes and ears were opened and he saw and heard the angel.

"Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass three times?" demanded the angel, while Balaam fell flat on his face in homage. "Behold, I went out to withstand thee because thy way is perverse, and the ass saw me and turned from me three times; unless she had turned from me, surely now had I slain thee and saved her alive."

"I have sinned," mourned Balaam. "Now therefore if it displeases thee, I will get me back again."

"Go with the men," commanded the angel, "but only the word that I speak unto thee shalt thou speak."

So once more Balaam mounted his ass and rode back to the road to join the cavalcade. When he reached Arnon, Balak came to meet him. Balak and Balaam went together up into a mountain and there Balak offered sacrifices on seven altars, and Balaam, speaking the word of God, blessed Israel.

In anger Balak went to another spot and built seven more altars; and again Balaam blessed Israel.

Once more Balak tried to curse his enemy. As Balaam stood looking down at the huge camp of the Hebrews in the plain below him with the tabernacle in the midst, the word of the Lord came to him a third time.

"Balaam the son of Peor hath said," cried Balaam, voicing the Lord's message, "and the man whose eyes are open hath said, 'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! God brought him forth out of Egypt; he shall eat up his enemies and pierce them through with his arrows. Blessed is he that blesseth thee and cursed is he that curseth thee. There shall come a Star out of Jacob and a Scepter shall arise out of Israel. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion."

"Flee thou now to thy place," cried Balak in fierce anger. "I called thee to curse mine enemies and thou hast blessed them these three times."

Chapter XII—MOSES' LAST GREAT SPEECH

O the Israelites unharmed still camped in the land of Basham and of the Amorites on the east side of Jordan. It was a fertile country with good pasturage for the flocks and herds. Here Moses numbered the people again before they should cross the river to take possession of their new land and divide it among the twelve tribes. The Israelites numbered now six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty souls, and only three men among them, Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, were left of those who had come out of Egypt.

The tribes of Reuben and of Gad, rich in cattle, were pleased with the pasture land where they now were on the east side of Jordan and went to Moses and to Eleazer the high priest and asked that they might take lands here for their possession.

"Shall your brethren go to war and shall ye sit here?" reproved Moses. "Wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them? Thus did your fathers when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land."

"Nay," answered the men hastily, "we will build sheepfolds here for our cattle and fenced cities for our little ones, but we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel. We will not return unto our homes here until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance."

To that Moses agreed. "If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed to war over Jordan until the land before is subdued before the Lord, then afterward ye shall return and this land shall be your possession before the Lord."

Half of the tribe of Manasseh joined Reuben and Gad in their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, and at once they all set to work to build fenced cities where their families might be safe in their absence. Moses waited, knowing that his work was almost over and that Joshua was appointed by God to lead the children of Israel in their struggle for their new land. When they were finally ready, Moses appointed his successor who was to lead into Canaan the people Moses had led forty years through the wilderness.

"I have besought the Lord," Moses said to the congregation of Israel. "'Let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan.' But the Lord said, 'Get thee up into the top of Pisgah and behold it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over. Joshua shall go over before this people and cause them to inherit this

and which thou shalt see. Encourage Joshua and strengthen him and set him before Eleazer the priest and before all the congregation and give him a charge in their sight.' "

In sight of all the host Moses ordained Joshua to take his place, and the people accepted him.

"Be strong and of good courage," Moses said to the younger man, "for thus saith the Lord, 'Thou shalt bring the children of Israel into this land which I sware unto them, and I will be with thee.' "

Then Moses turned to the waiting multitude and spoke to them his last great speech. He repeated to them the laws he had already given them and added some new ones; he reminded them of their own rebellion and lack of obedience to God through their years of wandering and of God's unfailing care of them; finally he warned them that in the country to which they were going they should remember that their God was one God and that they were His people; that they were not to intermarry among the heathen nations nor were they to worship their gods; they were not to allow the heathen to stay in their land and pay them tribute; they were utterly to destroy them, for only by keeping themselves separate from the heathen and dependent solely on their own God could they hope for peace and strength and prosperity.

"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God," Moses declared, reminding the Jews of the new covenant God had made with them on Mount Sinai, "and the Lord hath chosen thee above all nations that are upon the earth.

"And on the day that ye pass over Jordan, upon Mount Gerizim to bless shall stand Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Ephraim and Manasseh and Benjamin. And upon Mount Ebal to curse shall stand Reuben and Gad and Asher and Zebulon and Dan and Naphtali.

"And the Levites shall say, 'Cursed be he that conformeth not to all the words of this law to do them. But blessings shall come upon thee if thou do all His commandments.' And all the people shall say 'Amen.' "

And Moses, knowing that he had done his last work for his people by example and precept, stretched out his hands and bestowed his last solemn blessing on Israel.

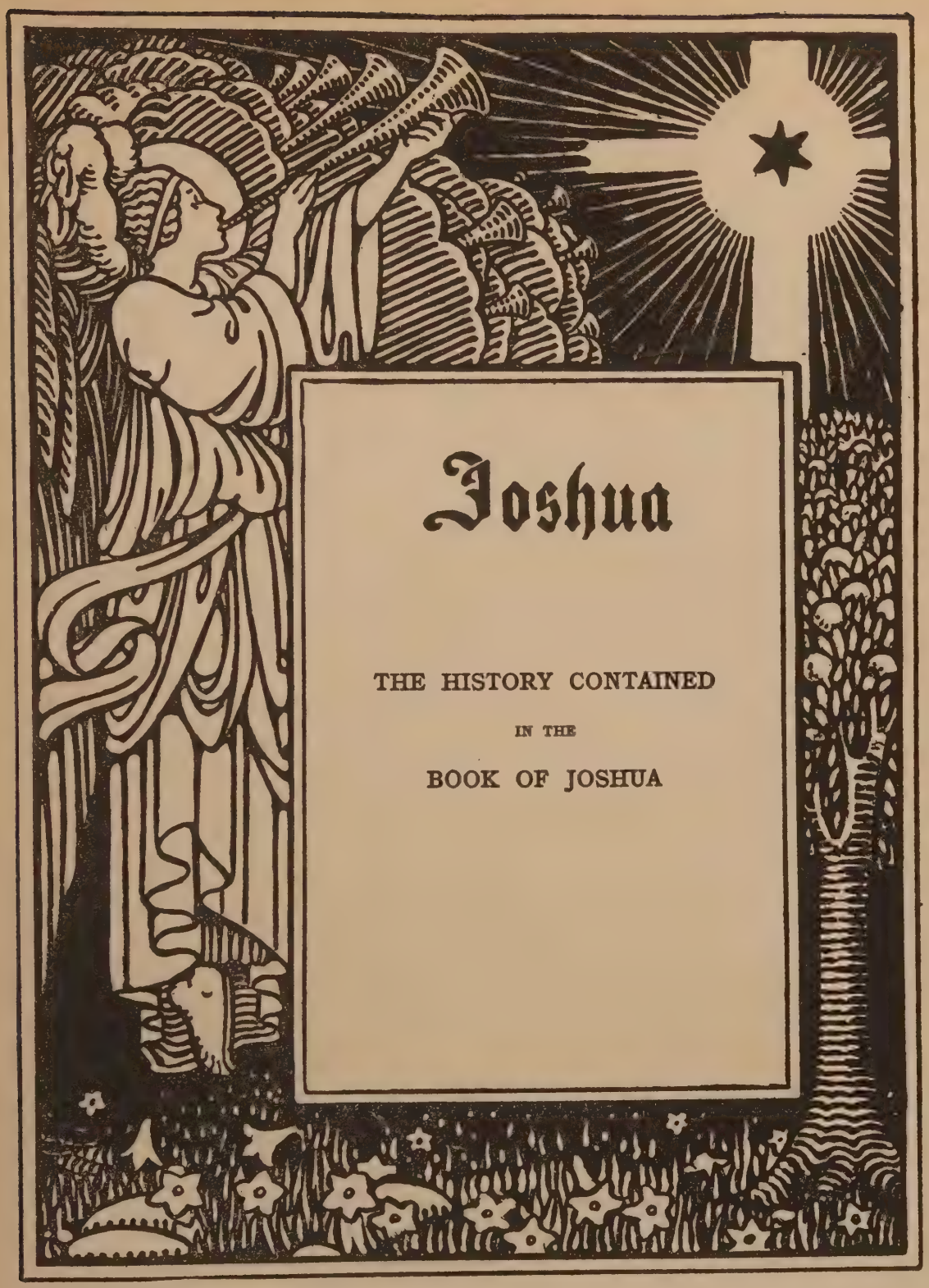
"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Happy art thou, O Israel, people saved by the Lord."

Alone, as he had gone before up Mt. Sinai, Moses now climbed the mountain of Pisgah up to Nebo, its highest peak. From there the Lord showed him all the fruitful land across Jordan, the land God had given long before to Abraham and was returning now to Abraham's descendants. Moses looked abroad, think-

ing of all Israel had gone through and the task still before it; and then, loving and trusting still the God who had led him so many years, Moses died alone on the mountain peak and no one ever knew where he was buried.

No greater man than Moses ever came to the Jewish nation until Jesus was born to it in the years far ahead.

The first five books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch, and in them are found the laws of the Jewish people. Moses was the law-giver of Israel.



Joshua

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE

BOOK OF JOSHUA

Chapter I—THE TWO SCOUTS

HE children of Israel waited in their camp while Moses went up on Mt. Pisgah. When he did not come back to them, they knew that he was gone forever and that Joshua now was to be their leader.

Then the voice of the Lord spoke to Joshua. "Moses, my servant, is dead," it said. "Now therefore cross over the Jordan, thou and all this people. Be strong and very courageous and observe to do all the law which Moses commanded thee, and every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon have I given unto you. Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for God is with thee wheresoever thou goest."

Then at once the bustle of breaking camp began among the hosts of Israel on the east bank of Jordan.

"Prepare ye victuals," Joshua commanded, "for in three days shall ye pass over this Jordan to go in to possess the land. All the mighty men of valor also of the Reubenites and Gadites and of Manasseh shall go armed before us until Israel shall have possessed the land. Then they shall return to this land of their possession and enjoy it."

The deep river Jordan lay between Israel and Canaan, and directly opposite them on the far bank was the strongly walled city of Jericho, but the children of Israel had after all learned a little faith and courage in their long wandering.

"All that thou commandest us, we will do. According as we hearkened to Moses will we hearken unto thee," they promised Joshua.

While the people were thus making ready for their invasion of Canaan, Joshua chose two men to send across to find out about Jericho, as Joshua himself had gone with Caleb and the others from Kadesh-barnea more than thirty years before to scour the land. The two scouts started, crossed the river and crept secretly into Jericho before its gates were closed for the night. They found in Jericho a little house built on the city wall whose owner, a woman named Rahab, seemed inclined to be friendly. So they asked her for a night's lodging.

Rahab had recognized the scouts as Hebrews from the camp across Jordan. She had heard the wonderful stories of the God who had fed these Israelites and

cared for them through forty years of wandering, and she had made up her mind that if God had led the Israelites across the Red Sea, He could also bring them across the Jordan and into Jericho. It seemed wise to her, therefore, to befriend these men against the king of Jericho, and very quickly she brought them into her house and hid them, for she knew that the king would soon be sending after them.

She chose a good hiding place. Up on the roof her flax, laid in straight bunches, was drying in the sun. Rahab chose a place on the roof for the men to lie down, and then covered them over with the flax till it was even and smooth and no one would imagine any one was hidden underneath. The scouts could breathe through their loose covering and, glad to be safe, they lay with what patience they might, while Rahab went back downstairs.

Almost as soon as she got there, two king's messengers dashed in, for in spite of their secrecy some one had seen the scouts enter Jericho and come to Rahab's house, and the king had sent hotfoot to seize the strangers.

"Bring forth the two men who are come unto thee," the king's messengers demanded of Rahab, "for they be come to search out the country."

But Rahab had no intention of giving up the Israelites. "There came men unto me," she answered with a careless shrug, "but I wist not whence they were."

"Where are they?" demanded the men of Jericho.

"It came to pass," Rahab went on, willing even to tell a lie to save her guests, "that about the time of the shutting of the gate when it was dark that the men went out; whither the men went I wot not." And then she added, as if struck by a new thought, "Pursue after them quickly, for ye shall overtake them."

She looked so much in earnest that the messengers, believing her, went quickly to the city gate which had been closed for the night. The guards let them through and closed the gate again behind them, while the messengers hurried down to the banks of the river Jordan to see if they could catch the scouts before they crossed back to the other side, but of course they did not find them.

As soon as Rahab had got rid of the king's messengers, she went up to the roof, pulled away the flax, and the men stood up, glad enough to stretch their legs. Then Rahab made ready to help them away. As her house was on the city wall it was an easy task. With a long rope she could lower the men to the ground outside the city walls, so that they should not have to pass through the guards at the gate.

"Get you to the mountains," she advised them. "Hide yourselves there three days until the pursuers be returned. Then may ye go your way. And swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that you will also show kindness to my father's house when you take Jericho. Give me a token."

"WITH A LONG ROPE SHE COULD LOWER THE SPIES TO THE GROUND OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS"

"Our lives for yours," the scouts answered. "When the Lord hath given us the land, thou shalt bring thy father and mother and all thy father's household home to thee and, behold, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou dost let us down by, and their blood shall be upon our head if any hand be upon them."

"According to your words, so be it," she said, and let them down through the window one after the other, and watched while they slipped away into the darkness. When they were gone, she turned to bind the scarlet line in the window.

Chapter II—THE FALL OF JERICHO

HE two Israelite scouts for three days lay in hiding. Then they crossed over Jordan back to their own host.

"Truly," they reported to Joshua, "the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land, for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us."

Joshua received the word joyfully and drew all the host close to the river-bank ready to cross in the early morning. Through the night the people rested and prayed. When the day dawned the priests, carrying the ark, marched down to the river and entered it. So soon as their feet touched the brim of the stream the current stopped; the water from up-stream rolled into a great heap and stood while the water flowed away and left the river-bed dry ground. Through this path went the priests to the middle of the river and there they stood supporting the ark while all Israel, tribe by tribe, moved past them and gained the west bank of Jordan. Then the priests followed the host. As they stepped on dry ground the waters of Jordan flowed back into their channel and the river was once more a deep current.

The children of Israel made camp at Gilgal as a good base for their attack on Jericho, and here they kept their first Passover in Canaan, making their bread from the grain of last year's harvest. And as they ate the crops of their promised land the manna that had fed them in the wilderness ceased to fall.

The king of Jericho, struck with terror at the sight of a host of forty thousand men with their families marching dry-shod over Jordan, shut his gates and allowed no one to come into the city or go out from it. But we may be sure that Rahab, as she looked toward the camp at Gilgal, took care to keep the scarlet cord in the window.

"ACHAN KEPT OUT FOR HIMSELF SOME GOLD AND SOME SILVER AND A BEAUTIFUL COAT AND HID THEM BENEATH THE FLOOR OF HIS TENT"

Joshua waited in Gilgal for the word of the Lord that would teach him how the Israelites were to overthrow the big, walled city of Jericho. One day as he sat alone praying, Joshua saw opposite him what he thought was a man with a drawn sword in his hand.

"Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" demanded Joshua at once.

"Nay," answered the angel, "but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come."

"What saith my lord unto his servant?" asked Joshua, bowing to the ground.

"See," came the message from the Lord, "I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."

The angel disappeared and Joshua, marveling, went back to give his orders according to the Lord's word. He chose the seven priests who were to carry the trumpets made of rams' horns and placed them with the priests who carried the ark. Then dividing his host into two parts, he formed his line of march with half his warriors before the ark and the other half as rearguard of the ark and the company of priests. Then he told them what the angel had said; that they were to march around the city in utter silence except for the trumpets until the hour arrived when he should bid them shout.

Silently and in order the procession formed and started on its first circuit of the city of Jericho. Once around it marched and went back to camp, while the wondering inhabitants of the city watched in alarm. As the night passed, however, without any attack, by morning their alarm had lessened, only to grow again as the Israelites set out once more on their stately, solemn march with no sounds except the tread of marching feet and the blare of the seven rams' horn trumpets.

For six days this ceremony was continued. On the seventh day the Israelites rose at dawn and went as usual once around Jericho, but instead of going back to camp, they marched again around the city, and then again and again, until they had circled the walls six times and started around the seventh. Then the silence was broken.

"Shout!" cried Joshua, "for the Lord hath given you the city."

The mighty shout that went up from forty thousand throats, added to the

blasts of the trumpets, struck terror to the people of Jericho. As they questioned what would happen next—they saw. Their thick walls that they had thought impregnable began to shake as if an earthquake were moving them, and as they watched and held their breath, suddenly with a tremendous crash the walls of Jericho fell flat.

Chapter III—THE HIDDEN GOLD

HE walls of Jericho were down, but before the children of Israel rushed in to take the city Joshua laid on them three commands; they were to destroy the city, to save Rahab, and to keep no treasure for themselves but bring it all to the treasury of the Lord.

The Israelites poured into Jericho, and all but one man obeyed Joshua's commands implicitly. Achan of the tribe of Judah loved luxury, and when he carried his booty to Joshua he kept out for himself some gold and some silver and a beautiful coat and hid them beneath the floor of his tent.

After Jericho was destroyed Joshua, not knowing of Achan's disobedience, sent an army of three thousand men to take the city of Ai near Bethel. Thinking that because the walls of Jericho had fallen so easily every city would surrender at their approach, the army, instead of looking to God for help, marched proudly in its own imagined strength to Ai. But Ai, instead of yielding, poured out its men against the invaders who broke and fled, pursued for miles by their foes. Finally what were left of them reached Gilgal frightened and disheartened. Joshua, dismayed, went alone to pray to God.

"O Lord God," he mourned, more easily cast down than Moses had been, "wherefore hast Thou brought the people over Jordan to destroy us? Would to God we had been content to dwell on the other side of Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites will hear of it and will cut us off from the earth."

"Get thee up," commanded the Lord. "Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, for they have taken of the accursed thing and put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel turned their backs before their enemies. Up, sanctify the people. There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel, and ye cannot stand before your enemies till ye take away the accursed thing."

Joshua rose up and in the early morning assembled the people and told them that some one for his own selfish ends had endangered the safety of the whole host.

Achan was afraid to confess, and Joshua, by means of casting lots, set about finding out the guilty man.

The lots were cast first among the tribes, and Judah was taken. All the other tribes were free. While the breathless congregation watched, the lot was cast among all the companies of the tribe of Judah, and the clan of the Zarhites was taken. All the other clans of Judah were free.

In the clan of the Zarhites the lot was cast, family by family. The family of Zabdi was taken, and the other Zarhites were free.

Then among the men in the family of Zabdi was the lot cast, and Achan, son of Zabdi of the clan of the Zarhites of the tribe of Judah, stood revealed before the camp as the man who had disobeyed the word of the Lord and brought defeat to Israel.

"My son," Joshua said sorrowfully to Achan, "tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me."

"Indeed," cried the unhappy Achan, "I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. When I saw among the spoils of Jericho a goodly Babylonish garment and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels' weight, then I coveted them, and took them, and behold they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent."

Joshua sent messengers to Achan's tent to find the treasure and until they came back silence lay over the camp, for it was a solemn occasion. It was the first disobedience and the first public trial since they had crossed Jordan, and all Israel knew that Achan had sinned not only against every man in camp but against the Lord of Israel.

Presently the messengers came back with their load. They laid it down before Joshua. Every eye turned to Achan as he stood with bowed head.

Then Joshua pronounced the stern sentence. All of Achan's possessions must be destroyed and Achan himself must die. It was a warning to Israel against greed and selfishness: a stern lesson that Israel could never win through to safety unless they stood as one man together in obedience to God and in allegiance to their leader.

It was a long, sad procession that wound down to the valley of Achor where Achan was to be executed. Achan was there and all his family and his possessions, the wedge of gold, the Babylonish garment, and the heap of silver: no man would use them now.

In the valley, Achan's belongings were burned, and he himself was killed and his body burned. Over his grave the Israelites raised a heap of stones, and came sadly and quietly back again to camp.

Chapter IV—THE AMBUSH AT AI

AFTER the execution of Achan the Israelites, humble and united, were called together by Joshua to discuss the new expedition against Ai. Thirty thousand men, about three-fourths of his fighting force, he ordered to be ready to march by night. The remaining ten thousand he kept with him.

Before sending away the thirty thousand he gave them their orders.

"Behold," he said, "ye shall lie in wait behind the city of Ai, and I and all the people that are with me will approach unto the city in the front. And when the people of Ai come out against us, as at the first, we will flee before them till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, 'They flee before us at the first.' Then ye shall rise up from the ambush and seize upon the city. And it shall be when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire. See, I have commanded you."

The thirty thousand men made ready for battle, marched away into the night, found for themselves a safe hiding-place outside Bethel near Ai, and camped behind Ai as they had been commanded.

Joshua and his men stayed all night in Gilgal, but early in the morning the whole camp was astir, ready to follow the advance guard with its twelve-hour start. This time the expedition was to be no light adventure of a handful of careless men, but a steady resolve from all the warriors in the camp.

Led by Joshua, the second Jewish army, relying on God and their leader and their own valor to give them victory, marched across the plain and the mountains to Ai. About nightfall they reached the city. Joshua sent half of his army to join their fellows in ambush, telling them that a flag waved on a spear in his hand would be their signal for assault. With the other five thousand men Joshua camped north of Ai with a valley between him and the city.

At early dawn Joshua from the north marched his little band boldly down into the valley as if to attack Ai, and the king of Ai, expecting a victory as easy as the first, gathered his armies and poured out upon the Israelites. At his advance the Children of Israel under Joshua, according to their plan, turned and fled, and every man in Ai, elated, pursued the flying army, leaving the city gates open and unprotected.

Then Joshua gave his signal. The men in ambush west of Ai seized the undefended city and set it on fire. Joshua's command, seeing the smoke, turned

against the armies of Ai and drove them back. The men of Ai saw their city in flames and before it an army many times larger than the one now driving them back. There was no escape for Ai; their city was burned and they themselves, caught between two hosts, perished almost to a man.

Immediately after their victory Joshua marched his host north to Shechem, which lay between the two mountains of Ebal and Gerizim where Moses had commanded the blessings and cursings should be read.

With the priests and the ark of the covenant standing between the two mountains, the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin gathered at the foot of Mount Gerizim and the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali gathered at the foot of Mount Ebal. And the Levites standing by the priests between the two hosts read out the words of the law.

"Curseth be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them," they ended. And all the people said, "Amen."

"But if thou shalt observe to hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord thy God and to do all His commandments," proclaimed the Levites, "blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in and when thou goest out. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. The Lord shall command His blessing on thee in all that thou settest thy hand to."

"Amen," echoed the people. And with the law fresh in their ears and God's promises new again in their hearts, they went back to their camp at Gilgal.

Chapter V—THE DECEITFUL GIBEONITES

HE news of the fall of Jericho and of the destruction of Ai spread far and wide through Canaan. Most of the nations gathered at once in a league to oppose the victorious invaders, but Gibeon, a city very near to Ai, planned to buy peace by fraud.

The Gibeonites, knowing that the children of Israel would not make peace with any nation near their line of march, pretended that they lived at a great distance. They chose for their envoys to send to Joshua men who were thin and tired-looking, dressed them in rags, tied worn-out sandals to their feet, loaded on their asses moldy bread for food and old wine in patched leather wine-bottles, and sent them off to Joshua at Gilgal to ask a treaty of peace.

In this forlorn condition they came limping into the Hebrew camp looking exhausted as if by a long, hard journey.

"We are thy servants," they said. "We be come from a far country. Now therefore make ye a league with us."

"Who are ye?" asked Joshua. "And from whence come ye?"

"From a very far country thy servants are come," they answered, "for we have heard of the fame of the Lord thy God and all that He did in Egypt."

Seeing that Joshua was interested they went on with their story, very cunningly saying nothing of the recent happenings at Jericho and Ai, which people far away could not yet have heard about, but telling about the destruction of Sihon and Og which had happened on the other side of Jordan.

"Therefore all our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us," they went on, "saying, 'Take victuals with you for the journey and go to meet them and say unto them, We are your servants; therefore now make ye a league with us.' "

Still the Israelites listened, and in spite of the solemn ceremonies at Mount Ebal, they never once thought of asking counsel of the Lord.

"This bread," said the Gibeonites, showing their moldy bread, "we took hot out of our houses on the day we set forth, and now behold it is dry and moldy. And these bottles of wine which we filled were new, and behold they be rent; and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey."

The curious Israelites tasted the moldy bread and felt of the worn-out clothes and believed the story. Even Joshua did not ask God about it, but, with the princes of Israel, signed a treaty with the men of Gibeon. Three days later, as they were still entertaining these envoys, they heard that the men with whom they had signed a peace lived only a short journey away from Gilgal. The Israelites uttered bitter reproaches against Joshua and the princes who had been so deceived.

"There is no help for it," said the princes. "We have sworn unto them by the Lord of Israel; now therefore we may not touch them. We will let them live, but this will we do to them: let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water to all the congregation."

Then Joshua called the envoys into his presence. "Wherefore have ye beguiled us?" he asked sternly, "saying, 'We are very far from you,' when ye dwell among us?"

"Because," answered the envoys, "it was certainly told thy servants that the Lord had given you all this land to destroy all the inhabitants from before you. Therefore we were sore afraid of our lives and have done this thing."

"Now therefore," Joshua answered them, "there shall none of you be free from being bondmen: hewers of wood and drawers of water."

"Behold we are in thine hand," answered the men humbly. "As it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do," and they went back to Gibeon.

But though the Gibeonites had got their treaty with Israel, they had not found safety. The other tribes of Canaan were very angry at the treaty which the Gibeonites had signed with Israel, and the league of kings formed against the Jews determined before they attacked Israel to punish Gibeon for so deceitfully buying peace with the common enemy instead of opposing them with all the other princes of Canaan.

Chapter VI—THE DIVISION OF THE LAND

ADONI-ZEDEC, king of Jerusalem, the head of the league against Israel, had watched with fear and anger the progress of the Jews. He had seen Jericho ruined and Ai burned, and now came the news that Gibeon, alone of all the tribes of Canaan, had made peace with Joshua. At once he sent messengers to the neighboring tribes.

"Come up and help me," he said, "that we may smite Gibeon, for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel."

The kings of Hebron, of Jarmuth, of Lachish, and of Eglon answered his summons, and together with the king of Jerusalem formed the League of the Five Kings. They declared war against Gibeon and marched against the chief city. The Gibeonites, struck with terror at sight of the foe, sent off messengers hot-foot to Joshua, not stopping this time for old shoes and moldy bread.

"Come up quickly and save us," they begged of Joshua; "for all the kings that dwell in the mountains are gathered against us."

Joshua, bound by his treaty, called his men of valor together to defend Gibeon from the vengeance of the five kings, for the word of the Lord had encouraged him. "Fear not," it said, "for there shall not a man of them stand before thee."

Joshua and his host therefore started at once from camp, and marching all night reached Gibeon by dawn and took the armies of the five kings so utterly by surprise that they broke and fled at the first attack. Away over the plains they streamed, pursued by Israel, and as they went word was brought to Joshua that the five kings themselves, stricken with a new fear of the Jews, had forsaken their

troops and were huddled into a cave together to save their own lives by hiding.

"Stay ye not," Joshua commanded his troops. "Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave and set men by it. Pursue ye after your enemies."

So with the cave turned into a prison and the five kings guarded captives within it, the battle went on until the armies of the five kings still fleeing before their pursuers met a new foe. Up from the horizon rolled a sudden black cloud which burst over the armies of the five kings in a terrible storm with hailstones so big that they killed the men they struck as surely as if they had been pierced by Israelitish swords.

But they would not yield. All day the battle raged, the Canaanites turning again and again to make a stand against Joshua. The day drew to a close and still the victory was undecided.

Then came the word of the Lord. "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon," it spoke, "and thou, O moon, in the valley of Ajalon," and the sun and the moon obeyed. For another twelve hours the light shone over the land, and at the end of that time the Canaanite armies were completely routed. The five kings were brought out of the cave where they had hidden in so cowardly a fashion and were executed.

The League of the Five Kings was thus destroyed and Gibeon saved. But before the Israelites lay still many foes who must be met and subdued. Stout-hearted after this great victory, the children of Israel went forward after Joshua up through the country until thirty-one kings had been defeated and town after town had surrendered. They even overthrew in the mountains the Anakim, the race of giants who had so terrified the ten scouts that went from Kadesh-barnea to Eshcol in Moses' time.

Then as the land was free from war, Joshua moved the camp farther north to Shiloh, about halfway between Gilgal and Shechem, and here the tabernacle was set up and Joshua and Eleazer, before the door of the tabernacle, divided the land by lot.

To Reuben, Gad and Manasseh land had already been granted east of Jordan where the country of Edom lay south of the Dead Sea and directly south of Moab. North of Moab, Reuben's portion lay along the Jordan; the Ammonites were his neighbors in the east. Above Reuben, in the land of Gilead, came Gad and Manasseh, Manasseh's land lying as far north as the Sea of Gennesaret.

West of the Jordan, the land to be divided between the remaining nine and a half tribes lay in a strip one hundred and forty miles long by seventy miles broad along the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. It stretched north as far as Phœnicia and on the south was separated from Egypt by the wilderness of

Shur. The Jordan shut it in on the east and the Mediterranean on the west. Along the southern shore of the sea lay Philistia, from which Palestine later took its name.

When the lots were cast for this land west of Jordan, Asher and Naphtali drew the lands farthest north. Below them came Zebulun; then Issachar and the half tribe of Manasseh; next Ephraim and Benjamin, with Dan tucked in by the sea; then Judah and last of all Simeon.

When the last of the land was divided, Caleb, who had helped Joshua bring the grapes from Eshcol to Kadesh-barnea, came to Joshua and asked for a special inheritance in the land of Judah which was the tribe to which he belonged. Joshua assigned to him Hebron, and to Caleb's family it was to belong forever.

After all the land had been appropriated, three cities on each side of Jordan were set aside for cities of refuge. Any man who had killed another by accident could be saved if he were able to reach one of these cities before he was arrested. He must stay in that city as long as the high priest lived; then he could go free. Besides the cities of refuge, certain cities were set aside for the priests to live in.

Then, everything accomplished, Joshua called the two and a half tribes who had helped their countrymen win the land.

"Ye have kept all that Moses commanded you," Joshua said to them. "And now the Lord hath given rest to your brethren as He promised them; therefore return ye unto the land of your possession on the other side Jordan. But take diligent heed to do the commandment which Moses charged you: to love the Lord your God and to walk in His ways; to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul."

With a blessing Joshua dismissed Reuben and Gad and Manasseh, and the warriors went back across Jordan to settle down in the cities they had built there, while the nine and a half tribes west of Jordan made ready to take possession of their portions and, according to Moses' law, drive out the last remnant of heathen from the cities so that when the Jews were established in the country there might be nothing to tempt them to the worship of false gods. Each tribe had before it its own task of finally clearing its land before settling in it, for Joshua, now an old man, had ended his work. He had led the children of Israel into Canaan to retake the land given long years before to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and he had divided it among the tribes. It was for them to hold it and to make it a fit resting-place.

Joshua, knowing now that his days on earth were numbered, called the tribes together. Beginning at the time of Abraham he recounted all the promises which God had made and fulfilled to the children of Israel up to the time he spoke.

"Ye have seen that the Lord hath fought for you," he went on. "Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, but ye know in your souls that not one good thing hath failed of all which God spoke concerning you. Be ye therefore very courageous to do all the commandments of Moses, for if ye do in any wise cleave unto the remnants of these nations that remain among you or make marriage with them, know for a certainty that they shall be snares and traps unto you until ye perish from off this good land which God hath given you. Now therefore serve the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the God whom your fathers served or the gods of the Amorites in whose land we dwell, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

"We also will serve the Lord," thundered the host, "for he is our God."

"Ye are witnesses that ye have chosen the Lord, to serve Him," said Joshua.

And they answered, "We are witnesses. The Lord our God will we serve and His voice will we obey."

The Judges

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE BOOKS OF

JUDGES · RUTH · I SAMUEL (I-IX)

✠

THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL

OTHNIEL · EHUD · SHAMGAR · DEBORAH
AND BARAK · GIDEON · ABIMELECH · TOLA
JAIR · JEPHTHAH · IBZAN · ELON · ABDON
SAMSON · ELI · SAMUEL

Chapter I—OTHNIEL, THE FIRST JUDGE

JOSHUA'S work was now accomplished. He had brought the children of Israel into Canaan and with Eleazer's help had divided the land among them. Now both he and Eleazer died.

Phineas, Eleazer's son, was made high priest in his father's place, but no one was appointed in the stead of Joshua. God had given them a leader out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and into Canaan. Now that they were settled in the land, with their tabernacle set up at Shiloh and with Moses' law to guide them, they needed no one but God for their leader, and He would speak to them through their high priest at Shiloh.

The children of Israel had before them now the final subjugation of the land, the driving out of every foe before they settled down to build their homes. They had been told over and over that they should not intermarry with any of the people of the land, that they should make no treaties with them, nor allow any to stay as subject nations paying tribute to the Jews, for both Moses and Joshua knew that if the Israelites lived on any friendly terms with the heathen tribes it would be easy to fall into their ways and forget the one God.

But the children of Israel had not even yet learned perfect obedience. What harm could it do, they thought, to let a few scattered heathen remain so long as Israel had possession of the land and was so powerful? Why waste in fighting the strength they needed to establish themselves in the new land? Besides, it was rather agreeable than otherwise to have tribes paying them tribute as conquerors of the country. So as they went, each tribe to his settlement, they began to fashion their own dwellings among the rich pastures and wooded hills and to pay little heed to the heathen unless they molested them.

The tribes of Simeon and Judah were the first to take real possession of their land, and they did better than any other tribe in driving out the heathen. Judah took the cities of Jerusalem and Gaza and Hebron. Here lived the giant Anakim who had so terrified the ten scouts. Hebron was given to Caleb as his special property. Caleb fought the giants and drove out many of them, but the town of Kirjath-sephar he found so hard to take that he was discouraged.

"He that taketh Kirjath-sephar, to him will I give Achsah, my daughter, for

wife," Caleb proclaimed, and Othniel, of the tribe of Judah, who had long loved Achsah, glad enough to show his bravery and win his wife at one stroke, took Kirjath-sephar and drove out the giants.

For the time it did not seem to matter so much to Benjamin, Manasseh and Ephraim, to Zebulon, Issachar, Ascher, Naphtali and Dan, that they had left the heathen tribes in their land instead of driving them out. But as the men who had known Moses and Joshua grew old and died and younger men took their places, they not only allowed the Philistines and other tribes to hold their lands and pay tribute to them, but the Hebrews even intermarried with the heathen tribes and lived on friendly terms with them. It was an easy step from that to worshiping the heathen gods.

The Hebrews never kept their unity and strength when they forsook their own God, and as they lost power, the heathen gained it, until the heathen made the Hebrews pay tribute to them.

The first to conquer Israel was the king of Mesopotamia. For eight long years he held Israel in bondage, until, in their extremity, they remembered the God who had brought them out of Egypt and returned to Him for help.

Always ready when His people prayed to Him, the Lord sent to the children of Israel a deliverer whom he made judge over them. This first judge was Othniel who had married Caleb's daughter and who still worshiped God and fought the heathen.

Under Othniel's leadership the Israelites made a stand against the king of Mesopotamia and were able to throw off his yoke. For the forty years that Othniel lived, he judged Israel, and Israel was free.

Chapter II—EHUD, THE LEFT-HANDED JUDGE

AFTER Othniel's death, however, the children of Israel, left without a leader, fell back into their evil ways, and it was not long before Eglon, king of Moab, with the help of the Ammonites and the Amalekites, once more reduced them to bondage.

For eighteen years Israel served Eglon, king of Moab, and then, repentant because they suffered rather than because they had sinned, the Israelites called once more on their own God.

Ehud, a left-handed Benjaminite, was their deliverer this time. He knew that the Jews were not strong enough to resist in battle the powerful nations they had let grow up among them, and to him it seemed the best plan to deprive the Moabites of their king and then, when they were without a leader, to attack Moab.

Ehud therefore made for himself a double-edged dagger, very sharp, about a foot and a half long. He stuck the dagger into his belt on the right side, hiding it under his robe. A right-handed man would have worn his dagger on his left side and that was where any suspicious person would look for it.

Ehud, sent with the tribute to the king's palace, found Eglon sitting in his summer parlor. Ehud presented his gift. Eglon accepted it, and then Ehud spoke to the king of Moab.

"I have a secret errand unto thee, O king," he said, and Eglon sent all his people away.

Then Ehud came nearer. If Eglon had any suspicion of him, he was watching the movements of Ehud's right hand, but that hung straight at his side.

"I have a message from God for thee," Ehud said solemnly.

Eglon understood that, and knowing suddenly what was coming rose from his seat, but Ehud's left hand swept quickly to his right side, and with one blow Eglon was slain.

Ehud left the king where he had fallen and went out. He closed and locked the door behind him, and through the quarries escaped and came to the mountains of Ephraim. There on his trumpet he blew the blast that was the sign he had made with his people. At the sound Israel sent messengers through the country till all Israel was collected at the fords of Jordan near Moab.

It was a long time before the king's servants found out that he was dead. Every time they went to his door, it was still locked and they thought him sleeping, until finally, alarmed, they broke open the door and saw him dead where he had fallen.

Israel had used these hours to arm, and when Moab, without a leader, gathered to oppose them, they found a host too great to resist. The Moabites fled before Ehud and his army, and Ehud pursued until there were not men of Moab enough left to hold any nation in bondage. Ehud had freed his people.

Chapter III—DEBORAH, THE WOMAN JUDGE

FOR eighty years Israel was free after the destruction of Moab. Then after Ehud's death the Philistines oppressed the Jews until Shamgar, the third judge, putting himself at the head of his army with an ox-goad for a weapon, slew the Philistines and again delivered Israel.

But the freedom did not last long. After Shamgar died the Israelites were subjected by Jabin, king of Canaan, who had for his commander-in-chief a very great soldier named Sisera. Sisera led in battle all the nine hundred iron chariots of Jabin and for twenty years he made his name a terror to the Israelites.

There lived at Bethel, where Jacob had his vision years before, a woman named Deborah, so wise that people came from far and near to ask advice of her. Now all Israel turned to her for help from Sisera, and at once Deborah sent for Barak of the tribe of Naphtali, and he came to her.

"Go," she commanded him, "take ten thousand men of Naphtali and ten thousand of Zebulon and go to the river Kishon. Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, will draw near to the river with his chariots and his multitude and shall be delivered into thine hand."

But Barak was afraid to undertake such an expedition alone. "If thou wilt go with me," he said, "I will go, but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go."

"I will surely go with thee," said Deborah, "notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor, for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman."

So having given up his right to claim the victory over the great captain, Barak, with Deborah, traveled back north to his own country, and collected his army. Sisera, when he heard that the Israelites were gathering in the north, called his army of nine hundred chariots together and marched to the river Kishon on the plain of Jezreel as Deborah had foretold.

"Up," cried Deborah to Barak, "for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand."

With his little army behind him, Barak went down from Mount Tabor to attack the mighty host of Canaan who despised the easy victory they thought they had before them. But in this case they were mistaken. The children of Israel, their manhood roused and their faith in God restored, fought so boldly that Sisera's

"'WHEN ANY MAN DOTH INQUIRE OF THEE,' HE SAID TO JAEL, '"IS THERE ANY MAN HERE?" THOU SHALT SAY, "NO"'"

army turned and ran before them. Sisera himself left his chariot and joined the mass of men on foot.

Though Barak had routed Jabin's entire army, Sisera on foot had escaped. He freed himself finally from the fleeing host and going on by himself came at last to a lonely tent which belonged to Heber, the Kenite. Heber's wife was named Jael.

Jael was alone in the tent when she saw Sisera approaching. She knew at once who he was and that Israel had defeated Canaan. She went out to meet Sisera and invited him to come into her tent.

"Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty," he said.

Jael gave Sisera milk to drink and made for him a bed on the floor. Sisera gladly lay down.

"Stand in the door of thy tent," he said to Jael, "and when any man doth come and inquire of thee, 'Is there any man here?' thou shalt say, 'No.'" Then Sisera fell asleep.

Perhaps Jael as she stood watching the sleeping man thought that what she meant to do would be rather treacherous to one whom she had received into her home, or perhaps she was so exultant at the thought of freeing Israel that she did not stop to think. Sisera lay in heavy sleep, unable to defend himself, and Jael killed him with a big spike that she drove through his temple.

Then she saw Barak coming and went to meet him. "Come," she said, "and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest."

She led Barak into the tent and showed him Sisera dead, and in his death the power of Canaan broken.

Chapter IV—THE STORY OF RUTH, THE MOABITESS

IN Bethlehem of Judah there lived Elimelech, with Naomi his wife and Mahlon and Chillion his two sons. They had well-to-do relatives in the town; one of them was Boaz, who was rich and descended in a straight line from Judah, Jacob's fourth son. Elimelech was comfortable in Bethlehem until a famine fell one year on the land and cut short his livelihood. Then with his family he moved down into the Moab country where there were fresh pasturage and a better supply of grain.

Elimelech died in Moab and left Naomi to bring up her two boys alone in a foreign land. Finally they both married Moabitish wives; Mahlon married Ruth, and Chillion, Orpah.

Then Mahlon and Chillion both died. Naomi, quite alone in a strange country, heard that the famine in Judah was over and, determining to go back where she had friends, called her two daughters-in-law to her and told them of her decision. She loved the two girls and they both loved her and were quite ready to leave their own country and go back with Naomi to Judah, but Naomi urged them to stay with their own people where they might marry again and lead happy lives.

Finally Orpah yielded, kissed Naomi and went back to her own home, but Ruth would listen to no arguments.

"Behold," urged Naomi, "thy sister-in-law is gone back to her people; return thou also."

"Entreat me not to leave thee," begged Ruth. "Whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me and more also if aught but death part thee and me."

Naomi, when she saw Ruth was not to be persuaded, left off arguing, and the two women traveled together to Bethlehem. Boaz still lived in Bethlehem, and as he had many fields, he was busy now in harvesting them.

Among the laws given by Moses to the children of Israel there was one about the harvest. "When ye reap the harvest of your land," it said, "thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of the field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger, that the Lord may bless thee in all the work of thy hands."

That law was still obeyed by the Jews, and when Naomi and Ruth arrived without money in the land of Judah, the way that occurred to them to support themselves was to follow the reapers through the fields and glean the stray stalks of grain that they dropped.

"Let me now go to the field," said Ruth, "and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace."

"Go, my daughter," agreed Naomi.

So Ruth set out to gather food for herself and her mother-in-law, and the God of the Jews, whom she had chosen for her God, directed her path, for, although she did not know it, the field she chose to work in belonged to Boaz, Elimelech's rich cousin.

The reapers were kind to Ruth and she worked faithfully, until finally Boaz himself came to the field to look after his men.

"The Lord be with you," was his salutation to his workers.

"The Lord bless thee," they answered.

Then Boaz spied Ruth and knowing her for a stranger stopped.

"Whose damsel is this?" he asked his servants.

"It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi," the foreman answered. "She said, 'Let me glean after the reapers,' so she came and hath continued even from the morning until now."

Boaz turned to Ruth, for her beauty and modesty and diligence pleased him.

"Hearest thou, my daughter," he said, "go not to glean in another field but abide here fast by my maidens, and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn."

"Why have I found grace in thine eyes," asked Ruth humbly, "seeing that I am a stranger?"

"It hath been fully shown me," answered Boaz, "all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law, and how thou hast left thy father and mother and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust."

"Thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid," Ruth said gratefully.

And Boaz answered again. "At mealtime come thou hither and eat of the bread."

So at mealtime Ruth sat down with Boaz and his reapers and Boaz gave her parched corn from his own hand. Ruth ate half of what was given her and half she saved for Naomi. Then she went back to work.

When she was out of hearing Boaz spoke to his young men. "Let fall some of the handfuls on purpose for her and leave them that she may glean them, and rebuke her not."

Ruth worked diligently till evening fell, and when she threshed out the stalks she had gathered she was amazed to see that she had almost a bushel of barley to carry home to Naomi.

Naomi in surprise and joy looked at the barley, ate the food that Ruth had brought her, and listened to the story of Ruth's day in the fields.

"He said unto me also," finished Ruth, " 'Thou shalt keep fast by my young men until they have ended all the harvest.' "

"Blessed be he of the Lord!" exclaimed Naomi. "Boaz is near of kin to us; one of our next kinsmen."

It meant a good deal to Naomi to find that it was Boaz who was so pleased with Ruth, for in the Jewish law the next of kin had certain rights of protection to all his kinspeople. As by the law all the land belonged to the Lord, as he had given it first to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and had restored it later to their descendants, any one who, like Elimelech, was in time of need obliged to sell his land, might redeem it again when he was able, or his next of kin might do it for him.

"The land shall not be sold forever," read the word of the Lord, "for the land is Mine, and ye are strangers and sojourners with Me."

Therefore Boaz had the right, if he wished, to buy back Elimelech's land, and the right also to marry any one who was left childless and a widow in Elimelech's family.

So as time went on through the barley harvest and the wheat harvest, and Boaz's kindness to Ruth increased, Naomi was well pleased. As for Boaz himself, as he saw each day how gentle and good Ruth was and that although she was a foreigner she was serving the God of Israel, he grew to love her, and finally he loved her so well that he wanted to marry her and redeem all of Elimelech's possessions for Ruth and Naomi. But there was one man nearer of kin to Elimelech than was Boaz, and to him by law belonged the first chance.

The city gate where every one passed in and out was in those days often the law-court and the place of business. When Boaz made up his mind therefore to take on himself Elimelech's responsibilities he went to the city gate and waited there for the man who was nearest of kin to Elimelech. When he came, Boaz called to him.

"Ho, turn aside; sit down here," he said.

The man stopped and sat down by Boaz, who had with him as witnesses ten chief men of the city. Then Boaz told his business. He was ready to redeem Elimelech's property for Naomi, if the man who was nearest of kin did not want to do it.

"I cannot redeem it for myself," said the nearest of kin to Boaz. "Redeem thou my right to thyself," and as a sign that the bargain was concluded between them the man took off his shoe and handed it to Boaz.

Boaz turned to his ten witnesses. "Ye are witnesses this day," he said, "that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chillion's and Mahlon's. Moreover, Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife."

And all the people that had gathered in the gate as well as the ten chief men

"RUTH WORKED DILIGENTLY UNTIL EVENING FELL"

answered, "We are witnesses. The Lord make this woman that is come into thy house like Rachel; and may thou do worthily in Bethlehem."

So Ruth married Boaz and they were very happy and always very kind to Naomi. When after a while a baby came to Ruth, she named him Obed.

Obed was the father of Jesse and Jesse was the father of David. And from the line of David in years far ahead was to come the child Jesus.

Chapter V—THE STORY OF MICAH

N the time of the Judges there lived in Ephraim a man whose name was Micah. He was probably an only son of a widowed mother and his mother had spoiled him.

In a secret place she had laid away a large amount of silver, but one day when she went to look at it, there was no silver to be seen. Horrified at the theft, she wept and bewailed her loss and poured her troubles into the ears of her son Micah. Finally she cursed the thief who had taken her treasure.

Micah had stood the complaints, but he was afraid of the curse, for he was the thief.

"The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee," he said, trembling, "about which thou cursedst, behold the silver is with me. I took it."

And what did his mother answer her son who had stolen her money?

"Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son," she said.

Micah, who had the money hidden away, went now and brought it again to his mother. She took two hundred shekels of the silver to a silversmith and he made two idols, one cut out of the metal and the other melted and poured into a mold. The woman gave the graven image and the molten image to her son, and he set them up in his house.

And this was happening in an Israelite household not very far from Shiloh where the high priest tended the tabernacle from whence the God who was Spirit was still ready to talk to an obedient people; where in the ark of the covenant still lay the commandments: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness."

When Micah received his idols he was so pleased that he built a temple for them and consecrated one of his sons as a priest and made him an ephod like that worn by the high priest, and in this temple Micah and his family worshiped.

One day there came along a young Levite who was traveling through the land from Judah. On his journey he stopped at Micah's house.

"Whence comest thou?" Micah asked.

"I am a Levite of Bethlehem-Judah," answered the man, "and I go to sojourn where I may find a place."

That pleased Micah, for he thought a Levite would make a much better priest than merely a son of his own. He spoke again.

"Dwell with me," he said, "and be unto me a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year and a suit of apparel and thy victuals."

If any men should have been obedient to God, it should be the Levites, whom He had chosen for His special servants. But even the Levites were corrupted by the heathen whom the Israelites had allowed to remain in the land, and this young man accepted Micah's offer as a very good way to support himself. He stayed in the household, and Micah looked upon him as a son.

"Now," said Micah, "I know that the Lord will do me good, seeing that I have a Levite to be my priest."

But a Levite tending idols made of stolen silver did not carry God's blessing, as Micah soon found out. Things seemed to be going smoothly enough until one day some men from Dan lodged at Micah's house. They were scouts sent out by the tribe to see if they could find farther north unoccupied land, for Dan's possessions west of Ephraim were too small to contain the whole tribe. The scouts talked to the priest and saw the idols and then proceeded on their journey. They found north of Naphtali fertile land which had not been given to any tribe, and went back with their report. Six hundred of the Danites started out at once with their families to found in the new country the city of Dan and on their way through Ephraim they passed the home of Micah.

"Do you know," said the scouts, "that there is in these houses an ephod and a graven image and a molten image?"

The entire party halted at this news and took counsel together. It seemed a great thing to them to carry these gods with them to their new home, so they waited at the gates of Micah's house while the five scouts who knew the place went secretly into Micah's temple, thinking to steal away the idols made of the silver which Micah had stolen from his mother. But the Levite priest was guarding them.

"What do ye?" he asked in surprise as they laid hands on the idols.

"Hold thy peace," said the men. "Go with us and be to us a priest. Is it better to be a priest to one man or that thou be a priest unto a tribe in Israel?"

The Levite thought he could get more riches from the Danites than from

Micah, so he himself took the idols and the ephod and went with the Danites.

When the Danites were gone Micah went into his temple and found that his priest and his idols had disappeared. In indignation and sorrow he set out immediately with a little body of men to reclaim his idols. He came up finally with the caravan—six hundred fighting men, wagons carrying the women and children, and herds of lowing cattle. Nevertheless Micah halted the Danites.

Some of the rear rank turned. "What aileth thee?" they asked.

"Ye have taken away my gods which I made and my priest," answered Micah. "And what is this that thou say unto me, 'What aileth thee?' "

"Let not thy voice be heard among us," thundered the Danites, "lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life with the lives of thy household."

Crushed by this threat Micah said no more. He stood watching the long caravan that was carrying away his treasures, and then went sadly home.

Chapter VI—GIDEON, THE JUDGE WHO SAW SIGNS

FOR forty years after the defeat and death of Sisera, Israel had peace, and in their peace turned again to idol-worship, allowing the heathen to remain in the land, until suddenly they found that in their sloth they had let the Midianites get full possession of the country. In every harvest time swarms of Midianites covered the plain of Jezreel like grasshoppers and the spread of their tents was like a snow-bank. The Israelites, when the hosts of Midian appeared, hid in caves in the mountains to save their lives, leaving the harvests and their cattle at the mercy of the invader.

In the half tribe of Manasseh that was west of Jordan lived a man named Joash who in spite of the Midianites raised a field of wheat and reaped it. Hidden behind a wine-press, Joash's son Gideon was secretly threshing out the grain, warily watching on all sides lest after all the Midianites should get the crop. As Gideon raised his eyes he saw an angel sitting under an oak-tree near him.

"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor," the angel said.

"O my Lord," Gideon begged, "if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of? The Lord hath forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

"Go in this thy might," answered the angel, "and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites."

"O my Lord," Gideon said again, "wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold my family is poor in Manasseh and I am the least in my father's house."

"Surely I shall be with thee," came the Lord's promise, "and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

Then Gideon hastened back to his own home and brought to the angel an offering of broth and bread and meat.

"Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes," commanded the angel, "and lay them on this rock and pour out the broth."

When Gideon had done as the angel told him, the angel stretched out his staff and touched the meal that had been spread before him. Immediately fire came out of the rock and devoured the food, and when Gideon looked again the angel was gone. Filled with awe at the thought that the Lord had spoken to him and accepted his offering as a sacrifice, Gideon built an altar under the oak-tree in Ophrah, and that very night, in the dark, with his servant's help, he overthrew the altar to Baal that Joash had built, cut down the grove that surrounded it, and built on the spot another altar to God.

In the morning when the people came as usual to worship Baal at Joash's altar, it was gone, and there was a new altar in its place.

"Who did this?" one man asked another. Finally some one answered, "Gideon, the son of Joash, hath done this thing."

The crowd at once turned to Joash. "Bring out thy son that he may die," they demanded, "because he hath cast down the altar of Baal."

But Joash answered calmly, "Will ye plead for Baal? If he be a god, let him plead for himself. I will call my son Jerub-baal, because he hath thrown down Baal's altar."

No one dared harm Gideon after that, and the young man boldly went on his way to collect his army.

The tribe of Manasseh to which he belonged lay just below the plain of Jezreel, and over the plain were pitched the camps of the Midianites and their allies, the Amalekites. Gideon sent his messengers through his own tribe and north through Issachar, Asher, Zebulon and Naphtali to summon all Israel to his standard, and to him they flocked in large numbers.

When Gideon saw the hosts that had gathered at his command he fell into a sudden panic. Suppose after all he had been mistaken and he was not the chosen of the Lord to deliver Israel! With his fear he went off by himself and prayed.

"If thou wilt save Israel by my hand as Thou hast said," he prayed, "behold

"THE GROUND WAS DRY, WHILE OUT OF THE FLEECE HE WRUNG A BOWLFUL OF WATER"

I will put a piece of wool on the floor, and if the dew be upon the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then I shall know that Thou wilt save Israel by my hand."

Tremblingly Gideon put out his sheepskin and went to rest. When early in the morning he came to look at it, the ground was dry, while out of the fleece he wrung a bowlful of water. Heartened by this sign, but not yet quite believing, Gideon asked that the next night the sheepskin might be dry and the ground wet with dew. And that too happened as Gideon asked.

Sure now that he was the appointed leader, Gideon marched his army to the plain of Jezreel and took up his position on the hill of Morah north of the plain. In this camp the word of the Lord came to Gideon.

"The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me saying, 'Mine own hand hath saved me.' Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people saying, 'Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him depart.' "

Gideon gave this message to his people, and to his dismay two-thirds of his army instantly withdrew and went home, leaving him with ten thousand men. But he knew these men were the bravest in the land and was satisfied.

But the Lord spoke again. "The people are yet too many. Bring them down to the water, and every one that lappeth of the water as a dog lappeth shalt thou set by himself, likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink."

Without giving them a reason, Gideon led his ten thousand brave men down to the river to drink. Only three hundred of the ten thousand showed the second soldier virtue of watchfulness. The three hundred, with head up and eyes alert, dipped the water into their hands and drank it. The other ninety-seven hundred threw themselves on their faces and drank from the running stream. Those men Gideon sent back to their tents; the three hundred he kept as his army of attack against the Midianites. He divided his men into three companies and put into their hands the odd weapons with which they were to conquer Midian. In his right hand each man held a trumpet, in his left, a china pitcher which concealed a lighted lamp.

"Look on me," Gideon said, "and it shall be that as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, then blow ye the trumpet also and shout, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!' "

Just as a new watch was set over the sleeping Midianite camp Gideon led his men quietly down the hill and posted them on three different sides of the camp. Then came the trumpet blast, and at the same time Gideon threw down his pitcher, holding the light safe as the pitcher fell.

Immediately three hundred trumpets blared and three hundred pitchers crashed and three hundred lamps shone out, while three hundred men shouted "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

The Midianites, waked out of sleep, confused by the darkness and by the noise and suddenness of the attack, thought that they were surrounded by a huge army, and fled before their own men in one struggling mass, leaving their tents and their treasures behind them.

As soon as the men of Israel heard of the rout, they gathered to pursue the fleeing Midianites and cut them off. Midian lost in all one hundred and twenty thousand men; her power was broken, and Israel was free.

Chapter VII—ABIMELECH, THE USURPER JUDGE

GIDEON had had many wives and at his death he left many sons behind him. One of them, Abimelech, as soon as Gideon was dead, determined to make himself king. Secretly he went to Shechem where his mother's family lived and talked to them.

"Whether is it better for you," he asked, "that all the sons of Gideon, which are three score and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you. Remember also that I am your bone and flesh."

Abimelech's kinsmen consulted together and concluded that if he were ruler, his mother's family would have many privileges which would not come to them if the son of some other wife were made judge. They not only therefore spoke a good word for him to all the men of Shechem, but they gave him money to hire a band of men to stand by him in his attempt to usurp the power.

With this band Abimelech marched to Gideon's house at Ophrah, laid hands on his brothers and killed them all but Jotham, the youngest son, who escaped. Then the men of Shechem gathered together and made Abimelech king and Zebul his chief captain.

When Jotham heard what had happened he came out of hiding and standing on Mount Gerizim, which rose above Shechem on one side as Mount Ebal rose on the other, he made to the people a stirring speech.

"Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem," he cried, "that God may hearken unto you. Have ye done truly and sincerely in that ye have made Abimelech

king? My father fought for you and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian, and ye are risen up against my father's house this day and have slain his sons, three score and ten persons, and have made Abimelech king over the men of Shechem, because he is your kinsman.

"If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Gideon and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech and let him also rejoice in you; but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem, and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and devour Abimelech."

When Jotham had ended he disappeared before any one could catch him and went back to his hiding-place.

For three years Abimelech ruled over Israel before they began to repent choosing him as king from all of Gideon's sons. Then he began to quarrel with his people, for a man who will kill his brothers to become king is not likely to make a good monarch; nor are the men who would help him to such a deed likely to make good subjects. It was not long before a man was found to head an insurrection against Abimelech; his name was Gaal.

"Who is Abimelech that we should serve him, and Zebul his officer?" he asked the people of Shechem. "If this people were under my hand, then would I remove Abimelech."

These words came to the ears of Zebul, Abimelech's captain, who was living in Shechem, and made him very angry. Though he still pretended to be friends with Gaal, he sent word of Gaal's treachery at once to Abimelech.

"Behold," he said, "Gaal and his brothers be come to Shechem and they fortify the city against thee. Now therefore up by night, thou and thy people that is with thee, and lie in wait in the field. And it shall be that in the morning as soon as the sun is up thou shalt rise early and set upon the city."

So Abimelech brought his force to Shechem and hid them by night in the mountains. Early in the morning Gaal, not suspecting anything wrong, rose and went out with Zebul into the city streets about the time that Abimelech's men were stealing down the mountain-sides to attack Shechem. The moving men, though they were far away, caught Gaal's attention.

"Behold there come people down from the top of the mountains," he said to Zebul.

"Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as though it were men," Zebul answered.

But Gaal, not to be deceived, turned and looked in another direction and in still a third.

"See," he cried, "there come people down by the middle of the land and another company along by the plain."

Then Zebul threw off all pretense. "Where is now thy mouth," he taunted Gaal, "wherewith thou saidst, 'Who is Abimelech that we should serve him?' Is not this the people that thou hast despised? Go out now, I pray you, and fight with them."

There was nothing else for Gaal to do, so sounding his trumpet, he called his men to stand against Abimelech. It was a faint-hearted opposition, for the men of Shechem had not yet fully aroused to oppose the man they had chosen king. Abimelech turned Gaal's force at the first shock and scattered them through the streets.

But though Abimelech did not push his victory, Zebul could not rest until Gaal's force was driven entirely out of Shechem. Once more he sent word to Abimelech, and again Abimelech ambushed the city. Early in the morning when the men of Shechem went into the fields to work, one part of Abimelech's men rose up and attacked the workers while the other part seized and held the city gates. All day the battle raged between the army of Abimelech and the army of Gaal, but by evening Abimelech had taken the city itself, though the citadel was still in possession of the men of Shechem who held now to Gaal.

As long as the tower was in the hands of his enemy, Abimelech knew that the city was not his. But the tower was an easy place to defend and a hard place to assail, and again Abimelech tried strategy. Retiring from the citadel as though he had given up the attack, Abimelech drew his men off into the mountains and bade them cut boughs from the trees. Each soldier carrying a bough, they went back to the tower of Shechem and set fire to it. About a thousand people perished in the flames and Shechem was destroyed. According to Jotham's first prophecy it had happened: fire had come out from Abimelech and devoured the men of Shechem.

After his overthrow of Shechem Abimelech marched against the city of Thebez and took that, but here again there was a strong citadel which defied him. All the inhabitants of the city crowded up into the tower and barred the door. Abimelech brought torches to burn the citadel of Thebez as he had the citadel of Shechem. But as he was himself approaching the door with a torch in his hand, a woman looking over from the top of the tower threw down on Abimelech's head a piece of millstone that struck Abimelech to the earth. Knowing that his end was come Abimelech cried out for his armor-bearer.

"Draw thy sword and slay me," he commanded the armor-bearer, "that men may say not of me, 'A woman slew him.' "

The soldier obeyed. And there under the citadel of Thebez near Shechem Abimelech died. Jotham's words were again fulfilled, for war with the men of Shechem had killed Abimelech.

Chapter VIII—JEPHTHAH, THE JUDGE WHO MADE A VOW

AFTER Abimelech's death the next judge was Tola of the tribe of Issachar. He judged Israel twenty-three years and died. Next came Jair of Manasseh. He had thirty sons, each of whom owned a city and a colt on which he rode.

When Jair died the children of Israel once more forsook the Lord for the idols of Syria and Moab and Ammon and Philistia, and as always when the Israelites made friends with the heathen, the heathen tribes increased in strength until they finally held the Jews in bondage. For eighteen years after Jair's death the Ammonites oppressed the Israelites east of the Jordan and even crossed the river against Ephraim and Judah and Benjamin.

On the east side of Jordan in Gilead of Manasseh was a man named Jephthah. Like Ishmael, Jephthah had a mother who was a bond-servant, so that he was not held by his brothers in much esteem although he was a brave man.

"Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house," they proclaimed, and Jephthah fled away and lived by himself. But his tribe knew his courage, and it was not long before messengers came to Jephthah.

"Come and be our captain," the men of Gilead begged, "that we may fight with the children of Ammon."

"Did ye not hate me," Jephthah answered, "and expel me out of my father's house? Why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?"

"We turn again to thee now," they replied humbly, "that thou mayest go with us and fight against the children of Ammon and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

"If you bring me home to fight against Ammon and the Lord deliver thee, shall I be your head?" demanded Jephthah.

"The Lord be witness between us," swore the Gileadites solemnly, "if we do not according to thy words."

So Jephthah with the elders of Gilead sent his defiance to the king of Ammon.

"What hast thou to do with me," Jephthah inquired, "that thou art come against me to fight on my land?"

"Because Israel took away my land when they came up out of Egypt from Arnon even unto Jabbok and unto Jordan," the king sent back word. "Now therefore restore these lands again peaceably."

Immediately Jephthah despatched his envoys with his ultimatum.

"When Israel came up from Egypt, Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites saying, 'Let us pass through thy land to our place.' But Sihon gathered all his people together and fought against Israel, and the Lord delivered Sihon into the hands of Israel and Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites from Arnon even unto Jabbok and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So now that the Lord hath dispossessed the Amorites, shouldst thou possess the land? When Israel dwelt three hundred years in all the cities that be along the coast of Arnon, why did ye not claim them before? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me. The Lord the Judge, be judge this day."

The king of Ammon paid no attention to Jephthah's message, and Jephthah, after he had summoned to his standard all the men of Gilead and Manasseh, marched against Ammon.

On the night before the battle Jephthah made a vow to the Lord. It was a foolish and unnecessary vow, for no burnt offering could be as pleasing to God as the "sacrifice of righteousness." But Jephthah made this vow and he meant to keep it.

"If Thou wilt deliver Ammon into my hands," he said, "whatsoever cometh from my house to meet me when I return in peace from Ammon I will offer up for a burnt offering."

The next day Jephthah threw his army upon Ammon and crushed it as utterly as Gideon had destroyed Midian. The men of Ephraim had not offered their services to Jephthah, but no sooner was the battle fought and won than they came to him with complaints that they had not been included. Jephthah, less patient than Gideon, instead of pacifying Ephraim, turned his army against the fault-finders and seized the fords of Jordan which the Ephraimites had had to cross to reach Gilead. When they saw that their complaints were met with an armed force, they were only anxious to slip back unobserved across the river to their own place.

But every ford was guarded by a man of Gilead who asked always the same question, "Are you an Ephraimite?"

"Nay," answered every anxious fugitive.

"Say now 'shibboleth,' " demanded the guard.

Shibboleth meant *stream* both east and west of Jordan, but east it was pronounced *shibboleth,* while those west called it *sibboleth,* for they could not say the *h.* Hard as they might try, always the Ephraimites said *sibboleth* in answer to the guards' command. And every one who could not say *shibboleth* was killed. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites died in this second civil war of the children of Israel.

When Ammon was destroyed and Ephraim punished, Jephthah went back to his home. As he approached, remembering his vow, he looked anxiously to see who would come out to meet him, and what he saw was his only child, a young girl, who came with music and dancing to celebrate her father's victory.

In despair Jephthah rent his clothes. "Alas, my daughter!" he cried. "Thou hast brought me very low. I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back."

When the girl heard what her father had done, she said to him very quietly, "Do to me according to that which hath proceedeth out of thy mouth."

So because of his foolish vow Jephthah offered as a sacrifice the thing that was dearest to him in the world. For six years afterward Jephthah judged Israel, and every year the Jewish maidens held in the mountains four days of mourning for Jephthah's daughter.

Chapter IX—SAMSON, THE STRONG JUDGE

FTER Jephthah came Ibzan of Judah who judged Israel seven years, and when he died was buried in Bethlehem. Elon of Zebulon was judge ten years after that, and then came Abdon, an Ephraimite, who judged eight years.

It was the Philistines after Abdon's death that held the children of Israel in bondage for forty years until a new judge arose to deliver his people. In Dan there lived a man named Manoah, who had a son who was a Nazarite. His hair was never cut, and as he grew up he became stronger than any of his companions.

When Samson was grown he still wore long hair, for he was still a Nazarite, and he was the strongest man known in the countryside. Every one talked about him. Finally he fell in love with the daughter of a Philistine, and in spite of his parents' disapproval he insisted on marrying her. At length they yielded.

"REMEMBERING HIS VOW, JEPHTHAH LOOKED ANXIOUSLY TO SEE WHO WOULD COME OUT TO MEET HIM, AND WHAT HE SAW WAS HIS ONLY CHILD"

On his way to Philistia to see the girl, Samson met a fierce young lion who sprang upon him. But Samson, seizing the lion in his strong arms, killed him as easily as he would a mouse and went carelessly on, leaving the dead lion by the roadside. When he went again a little later over this same road, there lay the lion still by the roadside, but a swarm of bees had made a hive in its body. Samson ate some of the honey, but he told no one about the lion or the bees.

When the time came for the wedding there was a seven days' feast, when all the girls and young men of the country made merry. To add to the gayety Samson said, "I will now put forth a riddle unto you. If ye declare it unto me before the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty sheets and thirty garments. But if ye cannot declare it unto me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty garments."

"Put forth thy riddle," agreed the young men.

"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," said Samson.

For three days the guests tried to guess the riddle but they could make nothing of it. Then they went to Samson's wife.

"Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire," they threatened.

The girl, frightened, went to Samson in tears. "Thou lovest me not," she said. "Thou puttest forth a riddle and hast not told it unto me."

"I have not told it to my father and my mother," Samson answered. "Shall I tell it to thee?"

The girl went on crying and begging until before the end of the seventh day Samson's courage was gone. He told her the riddle, and she hurried with the answer to the Philistine young men. They came to Samson proudly.

"What is sweeter than honey?" they asked. "And what is stronger than a lion?" and of course Samson knew who had given them the answer.

In great anger Samson left his wife, and going down to Ashkelon he slew thirty Philistines and gave their raiment to the men who had stolen his riddle. Then he went back to his father's house.

As time went on Samson forgot how angry he had been at his Philistine wife and wanted to have her again. But when he came to her father's house Samson found she had in his absence married another man. Once more Samson's anger flamed up and he decided on a quick punishment.

His first act was to catch foxes until he had three hundred. Tying them tail by tail in twos, he fastened a burning torch to each pair and started them out through the Philistine crops. The grain was partly stacked and partly standing,

and the foxes, running wild with their torches, not only destroyed all the grain but injured besides the vineyards and the olive-trees. When the Philistines saw the havoc which had been made, they were enraged.

"Who hath done this?" they demanded.

"Samson," some one answered, "because his father-in-law hath taken away his wife."

As they could not touch Samson, the Philistines turned on his wife and burned her house with fire. She and her father both died in the flames, so she met the very fate that she had tried to escape by treachery to her husband.

Samson's anger was so great against the cruel punishment that he gathered a force to attack the Philistines, and defeated them in a great battle. The Philistines scattered into Judah, and the tribe, not at all pleased to be overrun by Philistine hordes, sent messengers to Samson in his stronghold on the mountains.

"Knowest thou not," they reproached Samson, "that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done? We are come to bind thee to deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines."

"Swear to me," answered Samson, "that ye will not fall upon me yourselves."

"No," they answered, "surely we will not kill thee; we will bind thee fast and deliver thee into the hands of the Philistines."

Samson yielded. The men of Judah tied his arms with new strong ropes and led him from the rock to the Philistine camp. When the Philistines saw their enemy brought to them bound they shouted in joy. But they had not caught Samson yet. With a jerk of his mighty arms he burst the new ropes as if they had been threads, and looking about for a weapon saw an ass's jawbone lying on the ground. In his strength and fury Samson fell upon the astonished Philistines and slew them by the hundreds. With the jawbone of an ass he had broken the Philistine power.

After that no one disturbed Samson openly but they tried over and over to catch him in a trap. One evening Samson went to the town of Gaza and, knowing he was there, the Philistines shut the gates and with a strong guard waited for day to come that they might kill him before he could get out of the city. In the night some one told Samson; instantly he arose, tore the bolted city gates from their posts and carried them from Gaza to Hebron, where he left them.

After his battle with the Philistines Samson was made judge of Israel and was judge for twenty years. Then again misfortunes came upon him and once more through a Philistine woman whom he married.

This woman's name was Delilah, and people give the name of Delilah now to any woman who is treacherous. Like Samson's first wife, she feared the anger

"SAMSON, SEIZING THE LION IN HIS STRONG ARMS, KILLED HIM AS EASILY AS HE WOULD A MOUSE."

of her own people more than she loved Samson, and from the time she married Samson she trembled under the threats of what would happen to her if she did not discover the secret of his strength.

Samson knew that his strength lay in the fidelity with which he had all his life kept the Nazarite vow that had bound him to the Lord from birth, but neither he nor his parents had ever told any one about it.

At length the lords of the Philistines came to Delilah with a bribe. "Entice him," they said, "and see wherein his great strength lieth and we will give thee, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver."

Delilah, thinking her countrymen's money was better than their vengeance, set to work again to find out what made Samson strong. But Samson did not mean to tell his secret so easily.

"If they bind me with seven green twigs that were never dried, then shall I be as other men," he told his wife in scorn.

Pleased to think that she had gained the knowledge so easily Delilah got the seven little green boughs. After Samson was asleep, she let the Philistines into his room and tied his arms tight with the strong, pliable twigs. Then she called to him.

"The Philistines be upon thee, Samson."

Samson awoke as the Philistines started forward. With one movement of the arms he parted the twigs as easily as he could burn a thread in a candle flame and was ready to face his enemies. But they fled before him, and Delilah turned to Samson.

"Thou hast told me lies," she said to him. "Now tell me, I pray thee, how thou mightest be bound."

"If they bind me fast with new ropes," Samson said, "then shall I be as other men."

So Delilah got the new ropes, brought the Philistines into Samson's room and bound Samson hand and foot while he slept.

"The Philistines be upon thee, Samson," she called as before.

And again Samson sprang up and his fetters fell off like spider's webs.

Once more Delilah begged and reproached, and again Samson told her a lie. He said if she wove the hairs of his head into her loom that his strength would leave him.

Very carefully, while Samson slept, she wove his hair into her loom, fastened it with the heavy pin, and called, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson."

Samson, starting from his bed, carried both the loom and the pin away with him.

"DELILAH SENT FOR THE PHILISTINE LORDS. AS SAMSON SLEPT, ONE OF THEM SHAVED OFF HIS HAIR"

Delilah was almost discouraged. Three times she had told the Philistines she would deliver Samson to them and three times she had failed. They were losing faith in her promise, and she knew that it would not be long before they would vent their anger upon her.

"How canst thou say 'I love thee,' " she asked Samson, "when thine heart is not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times."

Hour after hour and day after day Delilah wept, reproaching and imploring Samson, till finally, as with his other Philistine wife, he yielded.

"I have been a Nazarite," he said. "If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me and I shall be like any other man."

Delilah sent for the Philistine lords, who no longer believed her. "Come up this once," she begged, "for he hath showed me all his heart."

Unhappily Samson *had* showed her his heart. The Philistine lords came to Samson's house and this time they brought their money in their hands. As Samson slept, one of them shaved off his hair.

For the fourth time Delilah called, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson."

Samson awoke and started up unafraid to face his foe as he had so many times before. But his secret was gone now and his mighty strength with it. He was as any other single man against many and could not escape his captors. They bound him with fetters, put out his eyes, and led him back to Gaza to grind their hand mill. He was not strong enough now to carry off the gates and escape. Day after day the mighty man worked like a humble slave. As he could not see, he could think the more, and his thoughts turned to God, whom he had forsaken for his heathen wives. And then little by little, as his hair grew again, Samson's strength came back to him, because instead of disobeying God's law, he was now in his affliction trying to obey God, who had appointed him to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

Samson was almost forgotten by the Philistines until one day there was a great feast to Dagon, their god. Three thousand men and women were making merry in Dagon's temple when some one suggested that Samson should be brought in that they might laugh at the poor prisoner who had once made them afraid by his mighty strength.

A boy led Samson into the temple and set him in the middle of it. The merry-making went on and Samson listened, still thinking how, like Esau, he had sold his birthright. In his misery, while the Philistines laughed and sang about him, Samson prayed.

"O Lord God," he said, "strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God."

Then he turned to the lad who had led him in. "Suffer me," he begged, "to feel the pillars that support the house that I may lean upon them."

The boy guided Samson to the two great central pillars that supported the roof. As Samson touched them he felt his whole strength come back.

"Let me die with the Philistines," he cried, and threw one arm around each pillar and put out all his force. The pillars cracked and bent and broke, and as they fell, the roof came with them, killing all that were in the temple. So Samson at his death destroyed as many Philistines as he had when he was alive.

Chapter X—ELI, THE JUDGE WHO WAS HIGH PRIEST

FTER Samson's death the Philistines, though not by any means crushed, were for a time repressed. There was peace in the land and the people remembered once more that there was a tabernacle at Shiloh and a high priest to offer the sacrifice of atonement once a year in the Holy of Holies.

Aaron had been the first high priest, his son Eleazer had succeeded him, and Eleazer's son Phineas had come after him. For many generations the descendants of Eleazer were high priests, one after another, but finally for a time it passed over Eleazer's line to the family of his younger brother Ithamar. Eli, a descendant of Ithamar, was high priest now as well as judge. He was a good man but he had bad sons, Phineas and Hophni. They were priests of the tabernacle, but instead of obeying its laws and offering to the Lord the sacrifices that the people brought to the tabernacle, they took the offerings for their own use. They lived only for their own pleasure and forgot there was a God in Israel.

"Why do ye such things?" Eli asked them. "I hear of your evil doings by all this people; ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" But the young men would not listen to their father; they went on in their evil ways.

While Eli was judge there lived in Ramah, a town of Ephraim, a man called Elkanah with his wives Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah had children but Hannah had none. Every year when they took their offerings to the tabernacle and Elkanah gave to Peninnah's children gifts to carry up to Shiloh, it made Hannah wish too for a son.

At last one day when they were worshiping at the tabernacle, Hannah by herself was weeping and praying to the Lord for a son to gladden her heart. She promised that if God would give her a child he should belong all his life to the Lord.

Eli, watching Hannah praying and weeping, asked her finally what was the matter. Hannah told him.

"Go in peace," Eli answered, "and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition."

Made happy by her prayer and Eli's blessing, Hannah stopped crying and went away with a smile. And the Lord heard her prayer and sent her the son she had asked for. She called him Samuel.

While Samuel was a baby Hannah stayed home with him while the rest of the family journeyed once a year to Shiloh to worship. But as soon as Samuel was big enough Hanah remembered her vow. Taking an offering with her, she went to Eli and showed him her little son.

"I am the woman who stood by thee here praying," she said to Eli. "For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord so long as he liveth."

Eli accepted the little lad to do service in the tabernacle. Samuel and Hannah made their offering and Hannah poured forth her praise to the Lord. Then with Elkanah she went back to her home and left Samuel with Eli. She never forgot him, for she prayed for him and once a year when she came to Shiloh she brought always a little coat for her son Samuel.

So Samuel as he grew up became familiar with the tabernacle service and with the duties of the priests. He knew too that Hophni and Phineas, Eli's sons, were not good priests.

They grew so very wicked finally that one day the word of the Lord came to Eli.

"Did I appear unto Aaron in Egypt and did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest? I said indeed that the house of Aaron and thy house should walk before me forever, but behold the days come when I will cut off thine house; this shall be a sign; in one day Hophni and Phineas shall die, both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest and build him a sure house, and he shall walk before mine anointed forever."

Sadly Eli received this message. He was growing an old man by this time and did not hear nor see readily, but he listened always for the word of the Lord and tried to obey it.

The word of the Lord came but seldom now to Israel. There was no great leader like Moses who waited always on the Lord. The judges had been brave

men but not always spiritually-minded, and even the high priests had not held the people to God's word. Now, instead of patriarch, leader or high priest, God chose the prophets to speak to, and Hannah's little son was the first of the prophets.

One night Eli went to bed while the light was still burning in the tabernacle. Samuel was already in bed. Just as the boy was dropping off to sleep he heard his name called.

Samuel jumped out of bed and ran to Eli. "Here am I," he said.

"I called not," answered Eli. "Lie down again."

Samuel went back to bed, but again came the call, "Samuel!"

Samuel went again to Eli. "Here am I," he said, "for thou didst call me."

"I called thee not, my son," Eli replied. "Lie down again."

But when this had happened the third time, Eli knew that it was the voice of the Lord that spoke to Samuel.

"Go lie down," Eli commanded, "and it shall be that if He call thee, thou shalt say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!' "

Wide awake now, Samuel went back to his place and listened for the voice. It came once more.

"Samuel! Samuel!"

"Speak, for thy servant heareth," answered Samuel, and the Lord spoke. He told Samuel what he had before told Eli, that Hophni and Phineas were such wicked priests to be over Israel that they must die, and that all Israel should be punished too for allowing such men to be priests, and that by and by Eli's family should stop being high priests altogether.

Samuel lay still in his bed till morning, thinking over the vision and dreading to tell it to Eli. But as soon as it was light Eli called him, and Samuel went.

"What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee?" demanded Eli. "Do not hide anything from me."

So Samuel told frankly all that the Lord had said and Eli answered, "It is the Lord."

The news ran all over the country, from Dan to Beer-sheba, that the word of the Lord had come to young Samuel, and everywhere people said, "He is a prophet."

Meanwhile the Philistines were growing stronger and stronger in the land. Finally they met the children of Israel in open battle and defeated them. Smarting under their defeat, the Jews recalled their fathers' stories of God's miraculous leading of the children of Israel out of Egypt to reclaim the land He had once given to Abraham; of the wandering in the desert, and of the crossing of

"'WHAT IS THE THING THAT THE LORD HATH SAID UNTO THEE?' DEMANDED ELI"

Jordan which held back its flood as long as the priests who carried the ark of the covenant stood still in the bed of the stream.

"Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us," they said, as they remembered Jordan, "that when it cometh among us it may save us out of the hand of our enemies."

Messengers were sent at once to Shiloh for the ark, but Eli did not want to let it go. He yielded at last, however, and Hophni and Phineas bore it into the Israelite camp. When the people saw it they raised a shout of joy that echoed to the Philistine camp.

"What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?" they asked.

"The ark of the Lord hath come into the camp," some one answered.

"Woe unto us!" they wailed. "Who shall deliver us out of their hands? Quit yourselves like men, O Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews as they have been to you."

Then the battle was on and back and forth it raged, the Israelites sure that God would give them the victory. But the ark in the hands of Hophni and Phineas, without the presence of God, had no power to help. Smitten by the Philistines, the men of Israel turned their backs on their enemies and fled. Hophni and Phineas were killed, and the ark itself was taken by the Philistines.

One of the fugitives from the battle ran to Shiloh with the bad news, ashes on his head and his clothes rent to show his grief. Eli, who had gone to sit by the highway after the ark was gone, fearing for its safety, heard the wail of sorrow that went up as the messenger proclaimed the misfortune that had befallen Israel.

"What is there done, my son?" asked Eli, trembling.

"Israel is fled before the Philistines," answered the man, "and there hath been a great slaughter among the people, and Hophni and Phineas are dead, and the ark of the Lord is taken."

Eli listened to it all, knowing that the punishment had come to his family which the Lord had foretold. But when he heard that the ark of the covenant had been taken by the Philistines, Eli fell from his seat and died. He had been judge of Israel forty years.

Chapter XI—SAMUEL, THE PROPHET JUDGE

AS Eli's sons were both dead, Eli's grandson Ahitub was made high priest when Eli died, and Samuel became judge of a repentant and sorrowful people. How could they look now for God's presence among them when the ark of His covenant was in the hands of the enemy?

The Philistines in triumph carried the ark into their city of Ashdod, and thinking their trophy would bring blessing to them as it had to the Jews, they set it up in their temple of the god Dagon. But when the next morning the Philistines went into the temple, the idol had fallen on his face to the floor.

The Philistines set up Dagon again and left him. The next morning the idol had fallen again and this time his head was broken off and so were his hands, and the priests of Dagon were afraid to go into the temple. At the same time sickness fell upon all the people of Ashdod till they were very much afraid and sent for the princes of the Philistines.

"The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us," they said, "for His hand is sore upon us and upon Dagon our god. What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?"

"Let the ark be carried to Gath," said the princes. Gath was a city which the Philistines had taken from Judah.

But when the ark had come to Gath, all the people of that city were sick, so they sent it on to Ekron, another city that had belonged to Judah.

When the Ekronites saw it they protested. "They have brought the ark of the Lord to us to slay us," they cried to the chief men of the city. "Send away the ark of the God of Israel and let it go again to its own place that it slay not us and our people."

It had been seven months that the ark had been in the Philistine country and the whole tribe, anxious to be rid of it, called their priests and wise men together for counsel.

"If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel," said the priests, "send it not empty, but return a trespass offering; then shall ye be healed.

"Now therefore make a new cart and take two milch kine and tie the kine to the cart and bring their calves home from them. And take the ark of the Lord and lay it upon the cart, and put the jewels of gold which ye return for a trespass offering in a coffer by the side thereof, and send it away.

"And if it goeth by the way of its own coast to Beth-shemesh, then we shall know it hath done us this great evil, but if not, then we shall know it is not God's hand that hath smitten us but it was a chance that happened to us."

The Philistines did as their priests had advised. They took the two calves away from the two cows and harnessed the cows to a new cart. Then when they had lifted the ark upon the cart and laid the box of gold beside it, they loosed their hold on the cows and left them to go where they wished.

Naturally, the cows would have gone straight to the shed where their calves were shut in; but these cows left the calves behind and, lowing as they went, they set out on the straight road to Beth-shemesh, a city on the borders of Judah, and did not turn to the right hand or to the left till they reached the city. The Philistines followed behind to see what would happen.

The men of Judah were in the fields at Beth-shemesh harvesting their wheat when they heard in the distance the lowing of cattle. As it came nearer they stopped their work to listen and wonder, and then the strange sight appeared to their astonished eyes. The ark of the covenant taken by the Philistines seven months before was coming back to them drawn by two cows, with no human being in sight. The cart came on into the field and there it stood.

At once eager hands were laid on the ark and curious eyes looked into it, before the Levites lifted it from the cart and laid it on an altar which the Beth-shemeshites hastily raised of stones. There they offered sacrifies to God. But the men of Beth-shemesh had forgotten that the ark was their holiest possession and that only their priests touched it. Sickness fell on them, too, for their curiosity in looking into the ark.

"Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" they asked, anxious to have the ark taken from their midst. So they sent off messengers to Kirjath-jearam, on the northern border of Judah. "The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord. Come ye down and fetch it up to you," they said.

The men of Kirjath-jearam came down for the ark and carried it up to their city, where they set it up in the house of a Levite named Abinadab, and his son was sanctified to its care. In Kirjath-jearam the ark stayed for many years and never went back to Shiloh to its place in the tabernacle.

When the ark had thus come back to the children of Israel, Samuel gathered the tribes together to impress once more on their minds the necessity for obeying God's commands.

"If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts," he begged, "then put away the strange gods from among you, and serve God only, and He will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines."

"We have sinned against the Lord," the people answered, and they made a solemn fast at Mizpah and turned from the idols of the heathen once more to the God of Israel.

The Philistines heard that all Israel was gathered at Mizpah in repentance for their sins and thought it would be a good time for a surprise attack. But the news of the arming of the Philistines came to the children of Israel and filled them with terror.

"Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us," they entreated Samuel, "that He will save us from the hand of the Philistines."

Samuel offered a sacrifice, for he was a prophet, and called on God, and God heard him. Even as he was offering the sacrifice the Philistines poured down on Mizpah, to be met by men whose hearts the Lord had strengthened to stand the shock of battle. The Philistines, thrown into panic, turned and fled, pursued by the Israelites, and so great was their destruction that it was many years before they again troubled Israel.

The Israelites loved Samuel, but he was now an old man, and the Jews feared lest when he died one of his sons would succeed him. They did not want an unrighteous judge in the land, so the elders of Israel gathered together to discuss the matter, and decided that as all the other nations had kings, they too would like a king over them. They went to Samuel at his house in Ramah.

"Behold," they said, "thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

Samuel was sad when he heard the demand. In his trouble he called to the Lord, and the Lord answered him.

"Hearken unto the voice of the people," he said, "in all that they say unto thee. They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me that I should not reign over them, according to all the works that they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day; they have forsaken Me and served other gods. Now therefore hearken unto their voice, yet protest solemnly unto them and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them."

So Samuel called the elders together and gave them their answer.

"This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you," he said. "He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

"And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

"And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

"And he will take your fields and your vineyards and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

"And he will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants.

"And he will take your manservants and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to work.

"And he will take the tenth of your sheep; and ye shall be his servants.

"And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

But the people, set in their own way, listened impatiently.

"Nay," they cried, "but we will have a king over us, that we may be like all the nations and that our king may go out before us and fight our battles."

"Hearken unto their words and make them a king," came the Lord's word again to Samuel.

"Go ye then every man into his city," Samuel commanded.

And Israel, eager for their king, went back to their homes to wait. They had rejected the spiritual rule and chosen the material kingdom.

The First three Kings of Israel
Saul · David · Solomon ·

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE BOOKS OF

I AND II SAMUEL · I KINGS (I-XI)

I CHRONICLES · II CHRONICLES (I-X)

PSALMS · PROVERBS

SONG OF SOLOMON

ECCLESIASTES

Chapter I—SAUL

I. A KING OVER ISRAEL

IN Gibeah of Benjamin lived Kish and his son Saul. Saul was young and brave, strong and handsome, and taller by a head than any of his fellows. To Samuel the word of the Lord proclaimed Saul to be the first king of Israel.

Saul, not knowing what was in store for him, went with a servant down to the neighborhood of Ramah looking for some of his father's donkeys which had wandered away. And when he could not find the beasts he went to the prophet Samuel for advice as to where to look for them.

"Thine asses are found," Samuel told the young man, and bade the servant pass on. Then, alone with Saul, Samuel said, "The Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over His inheritance," and poured the vial of oil over the young man's head and kissed him.

Saul went back to his own home for the present, but when Samuel summoned all Israel to Mizpah to receive their new king, Saul and Kish came to the gathering with the rest of Benjamin. But Saul was so modest that instead of showing himself in the assembly, he hid among the baggage.

Although Samuel knew already who was to be king, the people according to their usual custom proceeded to choose by lot. First the tribe of Benjamin was chosen, and then the family of Kish, and finally Saul was pronounced king of Israel. When, after long search, they found him in his hiding place and brought him forth, he stood head and shoulders above all his new subjects.

"See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen!" announced Samuel.

And all the people, excited and pleased because they had obtained their desire, shouted, "God save the king!"

The new king put himself at once at the head of his army to oppose the Ammonites who were besieging Jabesh-gilead across Jordan. Saul saved the city and so won the eternal gratitude of the people of Jabesh-gilead.

On the west side of Jordan Saul, with his son Jonathan under him and Abner for his chief captain, found use for his army against the Philistines. They had

grown very strong in the past years and kept Israel in such terror that many of the Jews had forsaken their homes and were hiding in caves. Saul left Jonathan at Gibeah and went himself down to Gilgal to wait there for Samuel to come to him, for the prophet had promised to be there in seven days to offer sacrifice and show Saul what to do.

Saul waited impatiently day after day at Gilgal, and when on the seventh day Samuel did not appear, Saul himself offered the burnt offering. As he did it he looked up and saw Samuel.

"What hast thou done?" asked Samuel sternly. "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord and now thy kingdom shall not continue. But go now and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have."

Jonathan, by a bold dash on the Philistine camp at Michmash, had put the Philistines to flight for the time, although they were too powerful to be crushed by one defeat. Now Saul led his army against Agag, king of Amalek, and took Agag prisoner. But not heeding Samuel's command, Saul carried the best of the Amalekites' sheep and cattle back to Gilgal.

"I have performed the commandment of the Lord," Saul said smoothly to Samuel when he met him in Gilgal.

"What meaneth then," asked Samuel, "this bleating of sheep in mine ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?"

"They have brought them to sacrifice to the Lord," Saul excused himself.

"To obey is better than sacrifice," Samuel answered. "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath rejected thee from being king. The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou."

Jealous of the unknown man who was to take his kingdom from him, Saul went back to his home in Gibeah, while Samuel went to Ramah. Never again did the two meet.

II. DAVID AND GOLIATH

THE next duty that came to Samuel was to anoint the man chosen to succeed Saul. According to the word of the Lord, Samuel went to Bethlehem to the house of Jesse, who had eight sons. When Samuel saw the oldest, Eliab, tall and strong, he thought Eliab must be the Lord's choice; but Eliab was rejected, and the second son Abinadab, and the third son, and the fourth and fifth and sixth and seventh. Then last of all they sent into the fields and brought in David, the youngest, from tending the sheep. In the presence of the lad's astonished family the prophet anointed David for the Lord.

David went back to his sheep then, and in his long, lonely hours under the blue sky and the stars he must have wondered what future God had for him. He had already proved his courage and strength, for he had killed a lion and a bear that had attacked his sheep; he knew that he could make music with his harp, and the poetry to sing to it; and he lived very close to God. Who but a loving child of God and a good shepherd and a great poet could have written the Psalm that begins, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Then for a time David went to court. Saul at Gibeah, brooding over his heavy secret and hating the man who was to succeed him, had fallen into such fits of depression that he was at times almost insane, and David was sent for to bring his harp and soothe the king with his music. As long as he stayed with Saul, David with his harp could drive away the king's darkest moods. Finally Saul, thinking he was cured, sent the boy back to Bethlehem. Jonathan, Saul's son, loved David and missed him when he was gone.

The Philistines had used the years since their defeat at Michmash in remaking their army, and now they were strong enough to invade Israel and pitch their camp near Jerusalem. They had among their captains a giant named Goliath, whose coat of mail weighed one hundred and fifty pounds and whose spear head weighed fifty pounds.

Saul at once summoned his army to resist the Philistines. Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah, David's three older brothers, were called to the colors, but David, not yet of fighting age, stayed with his sheep. In the Hebrew army, however, each soldier had to provide his own rations, and before long Jesse sent David to the trenches with parched corn for his brothers.

David reached the army in the morning just as the giant Goliath in his huge armor,—a servant carrying his shield before him,—was walking up and down before the Philistine forces challenging Israel to send a man to fight him in single combat.

"Choose ye a man," he cried, "and let him come down to me. If he kill me, then will the Philistines be your servants; but if I kill him, then shall ye be our servants."

While all Israel trembled at the giant's words David, unafraid and sure of God's help, offered to fight the giant. Eliab reproved him angrily for his self-conceit, but David was taken to the king. Saul did not recognize him as the boy who had played for him.

"Thou art not able to go against this Philistine," Saul said to David.

David told the king how he had killed the lion and the bear that attacked his

flock and added very simply, "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and the bear will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine."

"Go," Saul said, "and the Lord be with thee."

He wanted to dress David in his own armor, but after the boy had tried it, he put off the cumbersome things and ran down to the brook to pick out five smooth, heavy stones for his sling. Then he advanced against the giant, who sneered at his approach.

"Thou comest to me with a sword and a spear and a shield," David cried gallantly, "but I come to thee in the name of the God of the armies of Israel. The battle is the Lord's."

As the giant thundered forward, David drew a stone from his shepherd's bag, fitted it in his sling, and with his exact aim sent it at Goliath's head. The giant stopped as it hit him, stumbled, and fell, struck dead by the pebble in a shepherd boy's sling.

III. DAVID AND JONATHAN

WHEN the Philistines saw their giant champion overthrown by a mere lad they were again seized with a mighty fear of the Lord God of Israel and fled in every direction. Unmolested, David with Goliath's own sword cut off the Philistine's head. Goliath's sword was taken by the priests and laid away as a memorial of the victory, but as David left the field with the giant's head Abner met him and led him to Saul.

"Whose son art thou, young man?" asked the king.

"I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite," David answered and then Saul recognized him.

Jonathan, Saul's son, standing by while Saul talked with David, also recognized the lad and his heart was glad when he heard Saul order David to stay at court. As soon as David was dismissed, Jonathan followed him and in proof of his friendship the king's son took off his own robe and put it on David and gave him his sword and his girdle and his bow.

Then David became a great man in the kingdom; he was given a position of authority and did well in it, obeying Saul's orders and dealing wisely in all business so that he was respected by Saul's servants and all the kingdom. Everything went well until Saul's sullen spirit, which he thought cured, was roused again by the song of the dancing women at the great feast which celebrated the defeat of the Philistines.

"Saul has slain his thousands." they sang, "and David his tens of thousands."

"DAVID WITH GOLIATH'S OWN SWORD CUT OFF THE PHILISTINE'S HEAD"

"They have ascribed unto David ten thousand and to me but thousands," he said. "What can he have more but the kingdom?"

Perhaps for the first time then there darted into Saul's mind a suspicion that David was the man who should supplant him. His jealousy was stirred and from that time he hated the shepherd boy whom he had so highly honored.

David knew nothing of the change. One day when Saul was depressed and moody, David took his harp as he had done in former times to calm the king, but instead of soothing him, the music roused Saul to madness. He had a javelin in his hand and he threw it forward at the young man as he stood playing his harp. David escaped the weapon and went out of the king's presence, but Saul gave orders to Jonathan and to the chief captains to neglect no opportunity to kill David.

Jonathan, much distressed, went at once to David. "Saul, my father, seeketh to kill thee," he said. "Take heed to thyself."

"What is my sin before thy father that he seeketh my life?" David asked.

"God forbid! Thou shalt not die," answered Jonathan. "My father will do nothing that he hideth from me."

David shook his head. "Nay," he answered, "thy father knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, and he saith, 'Let not Jonathan know this lest he be grieved,' but truly there is but a step between me and death. To-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat. I will hide myself in the field, and if thy father miss me, say to him, 'David asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem.' If he say, 'It is well,' I shall have peace; but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him."

"If it please my father to do thee evil," said Jonathan, "then I will show it thee. I will shoot three arrows as though I shot at a mark, and I will send a lad to find the arrows. If I say unto him, 'The arrows are on this side of thee,' then there is peace to thee and no hurt. But if I say, 'The arrows are beyond thee,' go thy way, for the Lord hath sent thee away."

When the day of the feast of the new moon arrived Saul sat in his seat of state with Abner and Jonathan in their places, but David's place was empty. On the first day Saul merely wondered why David was not there, but on the second day when David still did not appear Saul asked where he was.

"David asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem," Jonathan answered, "therefore he cometh not to the king's table."

Saul knew at once that Jonathan was trying to shield David and it roused his anger. "Do not I know," he exclaimed, "that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse

to thine own hurt? For as long as he liveth thou shalt not be established nor thy kingdom. Send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die."

"Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?" asked Jonathan.

In his rage Saul threw his javelin at his own son. Jonathan escaped it and left the table in fierce anger. He knew that it was useless any longer to plead for David.

The next morning with a heavy heart Jonathan went at the time agreed upon out into the field where David lay hidden in a cave, fitted an arrow to his bow and sent it twanging far beyond David's hiding place.

"Run," Jonathan said to the lad with him, "find the arrow which I shot." And as the boy ran Jonathan called after him. "Is not the arrow beyond thee? Make haste. Speed. Stay not."

David in his cave heard the words and knew that they meant that Saul was still angry with him. He knew too that the command to hurry was for him and not for the boy. Jonathan's little servant, however, suspecting nothing, picked up his master's arrow and brought it back to Jonathan.

Instead of taking it, Jonathan handed the boy his bow. "Go, carry them to the city," he said.

The lad went away with the bow and arrows, and David ventured out. He embraced Jonathan and both the young men wept, for they were parting, as they thought, forever.

"Go in peace," said Jonathan finally, "forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord saying, 'The Lord be between thee and me and between thy children and my children forever.' "

Then David departed sadly, and sadly Jonathan went back to his father's house.

IV. DAVID IN THE WILDERNESS

DAVID, when he left Jonathan, went to Nob where Ahimelech the high priest lived, and as David was very hungry, Ahimelech, not knowing that David had quarreled with Saul, gave David some shew-bread from the tabernacle and allowed him to take as his weapon Goliath's sword which had been kept as a trophy. Doeg, an Edomite, Saul's chief shepherd, stood by and saw it.

Refreshed, David went into the country near Bethlehem where he hid in the cave of Adullam. His family joined him here, and his three nephews—all warriors—Joab, Abishai and Asahel; then the men in Judah who disliked Saul joined David; and then some men who were in debt, and others who were in

trouble, until he was head of a band of four hundred. His parents David took for safety down to Moab, to the country of his grandmother Ruth.

Doeg went back from Nob to Gibeah and told Saul that he had seen Ahimelech helping David. Mad with anger, Saul summoned the high priest to his presence and then had him killed at Doeg's hand. Abiathar, Ahimelech's son, at his father's murder, took the sacred ephod and fled to the cave of Adullam.

"I knew that day when Doeg the Edomite was there," David said when he heard Abiathar's story, "that he would surely tell Saul. Abide thou with me, for with me thou shalt be safe."

David kept Abiathar with him, and Saul appointed as high priest Zadok, a descendant of Aaron's third son, Eleazer. Thus there were two high priests in Israel.

David wrote the one hundred and fortieth Psalm in his fear of Doeg and Saul. Thinking that Saul would find him in Adullam, David led his men down near Hebron in the mountains of the wilderness of Ziph. Jonathan in some way found out David's hiding place and came to him.

"Fear not," he said, "the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee. Thou shalt be king over Israel, and that also Saul my father knoweth." Jonathan loved David too well to be jealous of him.

Jonathan did not tell Saul where David was hidden, but some of the Ziphites told him, and David was driven further south to the wilderness of Maon. Saul found him there, too, and would have caught him if a sudden Philistine incursion had not called Saul home. David escaped to the wilderness of Engedi near the Dead Sea, where for long months he hid in mountain caves.

Many of the most beautiful of the Psalms bear the stamp of one who has lived in the wilderness, and who going in fear of his life, knowing cold and heat, hunger and thirst, cruel enemies and fierce wild beasts, never loses his confidence in God's power of protection. When we read them, we can remember David's experiences.

After he had defeated the Philistines, Saul pursued David to his new retreat. David's band this time was too well hidden to be easily found, and one day, weary with the long search, Saul went into a cave to rest. At the back of that very cave was David.

"Thine enemy is delivered into thine hand," one of David's men whispered to him as Saul went to sleep.

"The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed," David answered, but he crept softly up to the sleeping king, cut off a piece of his robe, and stole back to his place.

Saul, when he had had his nap out, rose refreshed and went his way, and David on a rock watched him descend the mountain.

"My lord, the king!" he called suddenly.

Saul paused and looked back, and David, holding up the piece of the royal robe, told the king what had happened.

"I have not sinned against thee, yet thou huntest my soul to take it," he ended.

"Is this thy voice, my son David," Saul asked, touched by the other's generosity. "Thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil," and Saul stopped his search and went back to Jerusalem.

Samuel died at this time and was buried at Ramah. David went to the funeral, but in spite of the reconciliation with Saul he did not dare stay in Jerusalem or Bethlehem and went back to the wilderness of Ziph. Here again the treacherous Ziphites reported him to Saul, and Saul, his softness of heart forgotten, started on a new pursuit.

He camped one night in a valley directly beneath the rock where David was living, so that David looking down could see Saul's sleeping place and that of Abner, Saul's general. Taking his nephew Abishai with him David stole noiselessly down over the rocks, removed the water jug and the spear that stood by the king, and regained his own stronghold without disturbing Saul's camp. Then standing on the rock David called, "Abner! Art thou not a valiant man! Wherefore hast thou not kept thy lord the king? See now where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster?"

"Is this thy voice, my son David?" Saul answered for Abner, seeing that David had again spared his life. "I have sinned. I will no more do thee harm. Blessed be thou, my son David. Thou shalt do great things."

With this promise of safety to David, Saul once more went back to Gibeah.

V. THE DEATH OF SAUL

DAVID after all that had happened did not trust Saul's promise. "If I stay here I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul," he said. "There is nothing better for me than to escape speedily into the land of the Philistines, and Saul shall despair to seek me and so shall I escape out of his hand."

So David took his six hundred men into the Philistine country, and this time Achish, king of Gath, received him more hospitably, for since he had driven David away before he too had probably heard that David would one day be king of Israel and thought it well to be friendly, for he welcomed David and his men.

"If I have now found grace in thine eyes," David said to Achish after a while, "give me some town that I may dwell there."

Achish gave David the city of Ziklag and for almost a year and a half David lived there, making marauding excursions against the heathen tribes in the vicinity. Achish thought that all these expeditions were against the Israelites.

"He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him," Achish said to his men. "Therefore he shall be my servant forever." For Achish knew that if David had been fighting Israel he would never dare return to his allegiance to Saul.

When Saul had first become king he had ordered the destruction of all the fortune-tellers in the land, for Moses' law declared that the children of Israel should turn only to God for counsel and never to any heathen witch or wizard. A great many of the magicians were killed and those who escaped hid themselves, for fear of punishment if they were found. One of these magicians, a woman, still lived at Endor in Manasseh.

Saul heard that David had gone to Gath but he sought him no more. His own troubles were heavy upon him; he was suspicious of Jonathan his son, jealous of David his successor, harassed by the Philistines his enemies, and miserable with his own fits of depression. And worst of all, he dared not turn to God for help.

The Philistines had gathered a tremendous army again which had spread itself through Judah and finally on up through Ephraim until they reached Issachar, the plain of Jezreel near the Sea of Galilee, and camped in Shunem on the spot where the Midianites had opposed Gideon. Saul followed with his army and pitched camp near Mt. Gilboa, a few miles south of Shunem. Endor was north of Shunem.

When Saul saw the hosts of the Philistines his heart trembled within him. Afraid to pray to God, he yet felt he must ask counsel of some one.

"Seek me out a woman that hath a familiar spirit," he said brusquely to his servants, "that I may go to her and enquire of her."

"There is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor," they said.

Endor was nine miles north of the Philistines' camp, but Saul disguising himself took two men with him and very secretly went by night to Endor and found the woman with the familiar spirit.

"I pray thee," Saul said, "divine unto me by the familiar spirit."

"Behold," the woman answered, "thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits out of the land; wherefore then layest thou a snare to cause me to die?"

"There shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing," promised Saul.

"I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make war against me and God is departed from me. Make known unto me what I shall do."

"The Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand," came the answer, "and given it to David. The Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines, and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons die."

When Saul heard these words he fainted and fell to the ground, for in his trouble he had gone twenty-four hours without eating and he had taken a long journey. The woman, much alarmed, helped his servants revive him.

"Behold," she said to Saul when he came to himself, "I have taken my life in my hand and obeyed thy voice, now, I pray thee, hearken also unto my voice and eat that thou mayest have strength."

"I will not eat," declared Saul moodily.

His servants joined in urging him and Saul yielded.

The witch of Endor prepared Saul a midnight meal which he ate and went on his way. But his heart had not been lightened by his journey.

As the two armies faced each other at Mt. Gilboa the Philistines felt a growing distrust of David and his band of Jews, fearing that he might buy his peace with Saul by betraying to him the Philistines. Finally they induced Achish to send David back to Ziklag. David therefore was not present at the battle on either side.

Saul had no heart for battle. He knew that his end was near and his successor at hand, and his depression communicated itself to his troops. When the Philistines attacked in force they met no repulse; the Israelites broke at the first blow and fled over the plain, only to be cut down by their pursuing foe. The Philistines singled out Saul and his sons. Saul was badly wounded; Jonathan and two other sons were killed.

When Saul saw that the battle was lost and he himself doomed, he told his armor-bearer to draw his sword and thrust him through before the Philistines should kill him. The armor-bearer refused, and Saul killed himself with his own sword rather than fall alive into the hands of his enemies.

When the Philistines the next day found Saul dead they rejoiced greatly and set his armor up as a trophy in the temple of their god Dagon. They did not find his crown for some one else had already taken that. Saul was left unburied where he lay until the men of Jabesh-gilead, remembering how Saul had saved them from Ammon, ventured on the battlefield and took away the bodies of the king and of his sons to give them honorable burial.

"'WHY HAST THOU DISQUIETED ME, TO BRING ME UP?'"

Chapter II—DAVID

I. DAVID IN JERUSALEM

THE man who had taken the crown from Saul's head hastened with it to Ziklag, for all Israel knew now that David was to succeed Saul. When he saw David he bowed before him and told the story he had made up, thinking to please the new king.

"Saul and Jonathan are dead," he declared. "I happened by chance upon Mount Gilboa and Saul said, 'Slay me, I pray thee, because anguish is come upon me.' So I slew him, for I was sure he could not live, and I took his crown and have brought it hither unto my lord."

Instead of winning David's favor by his lie, the messenger wrought his own destruction, for David ordered the instant execution of the man who confessed he had killed the Lord's anointed. Then David mourned for Saul and Jonathan and wrote a beautiful lament for his friend.

When the time of mourning was over David went to Mount Hebron where the men of Judah quickly acknowledged him as king because he was of their tribe. But Ephraim and the other tribes, headed by Abner, Saul's general, proclaimed Saul's remaining son Ish-bosheth king of all Israel. Ish-bosheth was a weak man and could not have made his claim good by himself, but with Abner to help him he was a formidable rival. David made his capital at Hebron and ruled Judah for seven years. Then Ish-bosheth made Abner very angry, and the great general transferred his allegiance to David.

David had made his nephew Joab general of his army, and so strong-willed was the young man that the king seldom dared to oppose him. Even when Joab, in his jealousy of a second great general in the kingdom, killed Abner treacherously, David dared not punish him.

"I am this day weak, though anointed king," he lamented. "These men, Joab and Abishai be too hard for me. Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel when Joab has murdered Abner?"

Abner was buried in Hebron and the court mourned the fallen warrior. The public respect paid to Saul's general touched the heart of all Israel. When shortly after this Ish-bosheth was murdered by his own servants, David executed the murderers, and buried Saul's son honorably beside Abner.

That ended the rebellion. All Israel sent envoys to David at Hebron where

he had reigned for seven years and acknowledged him as king over the whole country.

Hebron was too small a city for the capital of so large a kingdom, so David took possession of Jerusalem and enlarged and strengthened and beautified it until it became a fit city for a great king. Hiram of Tyre in Phœnicia sent to David cedars from his mountains in Lebanon, and with them his own carpenters and masons to build David a palace.

II. THE PROPHET NATHAN

ESTABLISHED in Jerusalem, David defeated twice his enemies the Philistines, and, at peace then within and without, thought it time to make Jerusalem the center too of the national religion. The ark of the covenant was still in the house of Abinadab in Kirjath-jearam, and taking an escort of thirty thousand men, David went to bring it to Jerusalem.

The priests placed the ark upon a new cart that had never been used, yoked oxen to the cart, and chose as drivers Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab. With the ark in its midst the long procession started back to Jerusalem, harps and psalteries, timbrels and cornets, cymbals and trumpets making music as they went. Then as the wagon passed over a rough place in the road and for an instant the ark swayed, Uzzah, the driver, stretched out his hand to steady it.

Every Jew knew that it was the priests' work to handle the ark and that every other hand was forbidden to touch it. Uzzah's business was to drive; the priests were there to watch for the ark's safety. As Uzzar took upon himself the priests' office and touched the ark, he fell dead beside it.

At once the music stopped and the procession stood. Even David was frightened at what had happened. He would not take the ark to Jerusalem but sent it to the house of Obed-edom who lived near the spot, while he himself went back to Jerusalem. The ark stayed three months with Obed-edom and all that time only good came to him.

"The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that pertaineth to it because of the ark of God," some one told David at last.

So David, relieved of his fear, started out once more with blare of trumpet and the shouts of a triumphal procession to bring the ark to Jerusalem. It came this time in safety and was set up in a new tabernacle made to receive it because the tabernacle that Moses had made was still in Gibeon. In the new tabernacle David and Abiathar, the high priest, offered sacrifices to the Lord and when the

ceremony was over David blessed the assembled people and sent them to their homes with gifts of meat and bread to celebrate the great occasion.

For it was an event of the greatest importance to Israel. For the first time the Jews whom God had made His special people were united under one king with a capital where the ark of the covenant was set up permanently. They were now indeed a powerful nation and masters of the land.

David, perceiving how far God had brought them on their way as a nation, in his thankfulness wished to build instead of the tabernacle a magnificent temple in Jerusalem for God's worship, and turned for counsel to the prophet Nathan.

Nathan was pleased with David's plan for building a temple, but after the prophet had gone from the king to his own house and to bed, the word of the Lord came to him and said that David was not the man chosen to build the temple. At daybreak the prophet arose and went back to David.

"Thus spake the Lord," he said, " 'I will make thee a kingdom and set up thy son after thee and establish his kingdom. He shall build a house unto Me and I will establish his kingdom forever; my mercy shall not depart from him."

This was the fourth great promise that God had made to Israel. He had promised to the family of Noah, safety; a new country and a great race to Abraham; to Moses, the adoption of the children of Israel as God's peculiar people; and now to the tribe of Judah and to David's house He promised an everlasting kingdom.

David, as he listened, thanked God, and gave up all thoughts of building a temple until the son whom God had promised should be born to him.

After his victories over Philistia, David had to send his armies across Jordan against Moab and Ammon. Moab was subdued very quickly, but Ammon held out, and Joab besieged Rabbah, the capital city.

While Joab and Abishai were away fighting Ammon, David in Jerusalem, walking one evening on his housetop, saw a beautiful woman in a garden below, and at once fell very deeply in love with her. When he sent to find out who she was, David found out that her name was Bathsheba and that she was the wife of Uriah, one of his own captains.

So strongly did David want Bathsheba for his own wife that he did one of the worst deeds of his life. He sent Uriah to Joab at Rabbah with a command that Uriah should be put in the forefront of the hottest battle. Joab, when he received the message, set Uriah at the head of a forlorn hope, and Uriah and all his men were killed. When David received the news he married Bathsheba, and by and by a little son was born to them.

David knew that he had sinned even before Nathan the prophet came to

rebuke him. Nathan began by telling a story of a poor man and a rich man. The poor man had nothing to love but one ewe lamb. The rich man had many sheep and much cattle; but when he wanted to make a feast, instead of killing one of his own flock, he killed the poor man's one lamb.

David did not understand that this was a parable that Nathan was telling; he thought that some rich man in his kingdom had done an unjust deed and he was very angry.

"The man that hath done this thing shall surely die," he exclaimed, "and he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he had no pity."

Looking straight at him Nathan stretched out his hand. "Thou art the man," he said, and David's already guilty conscience felt a new pang as he realized what Nathan meant. The king who had everything had killed Uriah to get the one thing Uriah loved in all the world. As he bowed his head in repentance Nathan went on.

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'I anointed thee king over Israel and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah; wherefore hast thou despised the command of the Lord to do evil in His sight? Thou hast killed Uriah with the sword and hast taken his wife to be thy wife. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; evil shall rise up against thee out of thine own house."

"I have sinned against the Lord," David said simply; he did not try to make any excuses.

"The Lord hath put away thy sin," Nathan said. "Thou shalt not die, but the child that is born unto thee shall surely die."

The little baby did die, and David never forgot the lesson. His repentance was poured out in the fifty-first Psalm.

III. ABSALOM'S REBELLION

NOT many years after that Nathan's prophecy was fulfilled, for Absalom, David's son, revolted and turned his sword against his own father.

Bathsheba's first baby had died, but another little son came after a while. David called his name Solomon, and promised Bathsheba that Solomon should be the next king. David had other wives and other sons. Absalom, whose mother was a Syrian princess, was wild and self-willed and did not like the idea of yielding his place to a younger brother. Neither did Adonijah, the next son. Both young men were captains in the army under Joab and Abishai. The king's bodyguard was commanded by Benaiah and was made up of the Pelethites, the king's

runners, and of the Cherithites, his executioners. They stayed always with the king.

After Rabbah was taken and the army back in Judah, Absalom began to plan his father's overthrow. He set up a royal establishment, with horses and chariots of his own and fifty men to run before him when he appeared in public. He was a wonderfully beautiful young man in form and face, with long, heavy hair of which he was very proud. He had money to spend and could be gay when it suited him, and soon he had a host of friends about him.

Then Absalom went a step farther. He took to standing in the city gate early in the morning where the people brought their quarrels for settlement. He did not let them do him obeisence as to a prince, but took them by the hand and embraced them and asked what tribe they came from and what their troubles were. Then when the men, flattered at having a prince listen to their grievances, had told their story, Absalom looked grave.

"Thy matters are good and right," he said, "but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. O that I were made judge in the land, that every man might come unto me, and I would do him justice!"

So little by little, by flattery and false promises, Absalom stole away the hearts of Israel from David and turned them to himself, until, sure of his following, he thought it was time to declare his insurrection, and went to Hebron, taking with him David's counselor and friend Ahithophel as his adviser.

When at last word of the rebellion came to David, he seemed to have in him no thought of resistance. He could not have trusted Absalom as much as he loved him, for at once he feared what Absalom might do to him. Hastily gathering his goods and his family together, David with Joab and Abishai in his company and with Benaiah and his body-guard, fled before the rebellion started by his son and his dearest friend. Zadok and Abiathar, the high priests, bearing the ark of the covenant, joined the king's retinue, but David sent them back, for he would not take the ark from Jerusalem. Hushai the Archite came also to unite his fortunes to the king's, but David refused his company too.

"Return unto the city," he said, "and say unto Absalom, 'I will be thy servant, O king, as I have been thy father's hitherto.' Then mayest thou defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. Thou hast there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and they have with them their two sons. Whatever thou shalt hear out of the king's house thou shalt tell it to the priests and by their sons shall ye send unto me everything that ye hear."

So Hushai also went back to Jerusalem, but the priest's sons were lodged outside the city in Enrogel to be ready for sudden messages. David in exile from his

own capital crossed the brook Kedron and, weeping in his sorrow, climbed the slope of the Mount of Olives to take his way once more into the wilderness where he had lived in hiding so many of his youthful years.

In the meantime Absalom had taken possession of Jerusalem with Amasa, Joab's cousin, as commander in chief of his forces. All the men who had not followed David hastened now to swear allegiance to Absalom, as he established himself in the king's house.

But though they followed Absalom, they still feared David, whom they respected as a great warrior. Absalom knew that as long as his father was at large no one was safe. So Ahithophel, the wise counselor, was called to give his advice as to the best plan to overthrow David.

"Let me now choose out some men," Ahithophel said, "and I will arise and pursue after David this night and come upon him when he is weary and weak-handed. I will smite the king only and I will bring back all the people unto thee, so all the people shall be at peace."

There could have been no better plan for Absalom and he approved it, until he thought of Hushai, the other wise man in the city, and sent for him to see what he thought.

Hushai came, making obeisance to Absalom. "God save the king," he exclaimed.

"Why wentest thou not out with thy friend?" demanded Absalom suspiciously, for he knew that Hushai had loved David.

"Nay," answered Hushai, "whom the Lord and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be and with him will I abide. As I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence."

Absalom had bought Ahithophel so easily that he did not think it strange that Hushai should come over to his side. Thanking him, Absalom told Hushai of Ahithophel's plan. It struck Hushai with fear, for he knew that if Absalom pursued after his father before David's forces had had time to renew their strength and regain order, it would fare badly with David.

"Shall we do after Ahithophel's plan?" Absalom asked. "If not, speak thou."

"The counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good at this time," Hushai answered hastily. "Thou knowest thy father and his men, that thy father is a man of war. Thy father will not lodge with the people; he is hid in some pit or in some other place where we cannot find him. Moreover, all his host be mighty men, chafed in their minds as a bear robbed of her whelps. Twelve thousand men be too few to send against them. I counsel that all Israel be gath-

"THE MULE GALLOPED ON BUT ABSALOM WAS LEFT HANGING BY HIS HAIR FROM THE OAK"

ered unto thee from Dan to Beer-sheba and that thou go to battle in thine own person."

Because Hushai's advice sounded to Absalom more imposing and gallant than Ahithophel's, he followed it and at once sent his summons through the country for all the fighting men to join the colors. Ahithophel, knowing all was lost, went straight to his home and hanged himself, while Hushai, full of hope, hastened to the high priests, Zadok and Abiathar, and told them quickly how matters stood.

"Now therefore send quickly," he ended, "and tell David that he lodge not this night in the plains but speedily pass over Jordan."

A girl was sent at once with great secrecy to the two young priests, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, in hiding at Enrogal. The two young men sped with their message to David.

The whole encampment was immediately astir. No longer thinking of food or rest David's band pressed on to obey Hushai's warning and get across Jordan by night. Before the day dawned every man of the party was safely on the east bank of Jordan in Gilead, where Jephthah had once judged Israel. At Manhanaim, north of the Jabbok, where Jacob in old times had wrestled with the angel, they met Shobi, an Ammonite, and Machir, a man of Lodebar, and Barzillai, a Gileadite, who brought the fugitives beds and cooking utensils and wheat and corn and beans and lentils, as well as honey and butter and cheese and roast meat. So David was fed in the wilderness.

"I have been young and now am old," David says in one of his Psalms, "yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread."

As soon as his people were refreshed David drew them up in battle array. He divided his troops into three bodies, one under Joab, one under Abishai, and the third under Ittai of Gath, who had followed him into exile. He reviewed them in the city gate of Mananaim.

"Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom," were his last words to Joab and Abishai and Ittai, and the army heard the command.

Absalom in the meantime, according to the advice of Hushai, had collected a large army, which under the command of Amasa and Absalom had crossed the Jordan and was now encamped in Gilead north of the Jabbok and near the fords of Ephraim. For the night the armies faced each other.

The country between the armies was rough land broken by woods that made assault difficult. Early in the morning, however, Absalom threw his forces against David's. Joab was ready for him, and back and forth, through the woods and over the fields, raged the fight. Horses were stuck in bogs, men were lost in the forest, and everywhere brothers were killing brothers.

Absalom, fearless and impetuous, was here and there and everywhere, galloping his mule through the woods regardless of danger. At last as he went under a big oak a branch struck him unawares and, catching his long, thick hair, lifted him from the saddle. The mule galloped on, but Absalom was left hanging by his hair from the oak.

One of David's men saw him and went to Joab. "Behold," he said, "I saw Absalom hanged in an oak."

With three darts in his hand Joab rode straight to the tree where Absalom was hanging. Absalom when he saw him knew that his days were ended. Without pity Joab killed the man who had made David so much trouble and buried him in the wood. Then he blew the trumpet of recall to the army, for with the death of Absalom the rebellion was crushed.

Ahimaaz, son of Zadok, was with David's troops and he heard of Absalom's death. "Let me now run," he begged of Joab, "and bear the king tidings how the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies."

"Run then," Joab answered, and the fleet-footed young priest was off.

David, hoping and fearing for the results of the battle, was sitting under the arched gate of the walls of Mahanaim while the watchman in the tower above his head looked abroad over the country. As he looked he saw Ahimaaz running toward him.

"Behold, a man running alone!" he called to the king.

"If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth," said David.

"Methinketh," went on the watchman from the tower, "that his running is like the running of Ahimaaz, son of Zadok."

"He is a good man and cometh with good tidings," answered David.

Then Ahimaaz, breathless with his long run, reached the king and bowed before him. "All is well," he cried, telling his good news first, for he had run his best that David might hear of the victory from his lips before he heard of Absalom's death. "Blessed be the Lord thy God which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king."

"Is the young man Absalom safe?" was David's eager question.

"The enemies of my lord the king be as that young man is," answered the messenger solemnly, and David knew that his son was dead.

With no word of pleasure over the victory David went heavily up to his chamber in the city wall and as he went he cried aloud, "O my son Absalom! My son! My son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

David could not cherish his private grief long, for he must congratulate his

soldiers on their victory and then prepare to return to Jerusalem. Along the road over which he had fled in tears the king went back in triumph, through Gilead to Jordan, where the men of Judah had a ferry boat to carry him and his family back to the west side of Jordan.

The king's host reached Gilgal and from there proceeded to Jerusalem. At every step men were added to the throng, not only from Judah but from the northern tribes, for all Israel now wanted to welcome the man they had driven out. Indeed so eager were the northern tribes now to make up for their adherence to Absalom that they were very jealous of Judah for sending an escort to bring the king back to his capital.

"Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen thee away," they complained, "and have brought the king and his household over Jordan?"

The men of Judah, proud because the king was of their tribe, answered haughtily that as the king was near of kin to them it was their right to escort him and there was no reason for the other tribes to be angry. But they were very angry.

"We have ten parts of the king," they said, "and Judah but one. We have more right in David than ye have. Why did ye despise us that our advice should not first be had in bringing back the king?"

Judah answered again fiercely and the ten tribes retorted. Benjamin, grateful to David for his kindness to Saul's family, kept out of the disturbance, but between Judah and the ten tribes of Israel came a quarrel that made a breach that was never wholly healed. In the course of the fighting Joab killed Amasa, for he would not allow a rival in the kingdom.

IV. SOLOMON'S CORONATION

ON his return to Jerusalem David found that the Philistines had invaded the land and seized many of his cities; among them his own city of Bethlehem. He was obliged therefore to turn his arms against these invaders. One day as David sat in his camp his thoughts turned back to Bethlehem, the home of his boyhood, and to the happy, innocent hours he had spent there.

"Oh," he exclaimed impulsively, "if some one would give me a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!"

Three of his mighty men heard him, and thinking no danger too great if they could please the king, they broke through the Philistine guard at the gate of Bethlehem and did indeed bring back to David the drink he craved. But the king would not drink the water; he poured it on the ground as a sort of sacrifice.

"Be it far from me, O Lord," he said solemnly, "that I should drink this. Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?"

When the Philistines were finally defeated David wrote one of his stirring Psalms to mark the victory. It is in the twenty-second chapter of II Samuel.

But David seemed to forget pretty soon that his strength lay in the Lord, and to think that it lay in the size of his army. In his pride he sent Joab through all the land, from Dan to Beer-sheba to number the fighting men. It took Joab nine months to do it, and he reported the number as one million three hundred thousand warriors.

While David's heart was still swelling with pride, Gad the prophet came to tell him that he had sinned in counting men instead of trusting God.

"I have sinned greatly," David answered.

"Choose," said Gad. "Shall seven years of famine come in the land? Or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies? Or shall there be three days of pestilence in the land?"

"I am in a great strait," answered the repentant king; "let us fall now into the hand of the Lord."

The pestilence fell on the kingdom and men died of it by hundreds until David saw that the power of his kingdom did not lie in the number of fighting men, which a day could change.

When the pestilence stopped, the word of Gad came to David. "Go up," he cried. "Rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, for there the angel of the Lord stayed his hand."

At once David obeyed. With his retinue he went up toward Mount Moriah, where Abraham had taken Isaac for sacrifice, and as they neared Araunah's threshing-floor in the mountain Araunah saw them and came out to meet them.

"Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant?" he asked, bowing to the ground.

"To buy the threshing-floor of thee to build an altar to the Lord," David answered.

"Let my lord the king take what seemeth good to him," said Araunah. "Here be oxen for sacrifice and threshing instruments for wood."

"Nay," said the king, "but I will surely buy it of thee at a price. I will not offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."

Fifty shekels of silver David gave Araunah for the floor, and there he built the altar and offered sacrifice to atone for his sin and save Israel. And that spot where David built his altar on the threshing-floor of Araunah on Mount Moriah was chosen as the site of the temple which Solomon was to build.

David, who had for many years been preparing materials for Solomon's temple, started again with renewed effort after he knew where it was to be built. "The house that is builded for the Lord must be very magnifical," he said.

Masons were set to cutting huge blocks of stone, and wood-cutters to shaping the cedar wood that came from Tyre and Sidon in Phœnicia. Besides the wealth that David had gathered from conquered cities he received now from the Hebrews much treasure which they gave gladly to God's house. The gold and silver and the brass were fashioned into adornment and the iron was wrought into nails. Plans were made of the temple building with the courts and porches, and David laid out the ceremonial of the temple, portioning the work of the priests and Levites. He divided the priests into twenty-four orders or "courses," each of which was to perform the temple service in turn. He wrote Psalms and chose out musical instruments to be used in the temple worship, for David always loved music.

David was an old man by the time he had finished all his preparations. He felt that his life work was accomplished and he asked only that his last years should be years of peace. But that was not to be. The sword that should rise out of his own family against him, as Nathan had foretold, had not perished with Absalom. It was in the hand of Absalom's brother, Adonijah, and he turned it once more against King David.

Adonijah, like Absalom, had no mind to be set aside for his younger brother Solomon, and he thought this the time to get his rights while David was old and helpless. As Absalom had done earlier, he got for himself chariots and horsemen and fifty men to run before him. What was more important, he won over to his side Joab, the commander-in-chief of the king's armies, and Abiathar, the high priest, who had for so many years been David's friend. Benaiah and Zadok remained loyal to David.

To the well at Enrogal, where the young priests had waited to carry to David news of Absalom's rebellion, Adonijah now called a council of his brothers and Joab and many mighty men. Although he sent no invitation to his brother Solomon nor to Benaiah nor to Zadok nor to Nathan, Nathan heard of the gathering at Enrogel and went up at once to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother for David was too old now to care for the affairs of his kingdom.

"Hast thou not heard," Nathan said, "that Adonijah doth reign and David knoweth it not? Let me now, I pray thee, give thee counsel that thou mayest save thine own life and the life of thy son Solomon. Go to King David and say to him, 'Didst thou not say that Solomon, my son, shall reign after thee? Why

then doth Adonijah reign?' And I will come in after thee and confirm thy words."

Bathsheba went to the king with the words Nathan had bidden her speak. She told him too that Joab and Abiathar had gone over to Adonijah.

"The eyes of all Israel are upon thee," she ended, "that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of the king after him. Otherwise it shall be that when the king shall sleep with his fathers I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders."

While she spoke, Nathan was admitted and he, bowing low, repeated Bethsheba's story and asked whether David wished Solomon or Adonijah to reign after him.

"Behold," said Nathan, "the captains of the host eat with Adonijah and say, 'God save King Adonijah!' "

That roused David to his old-time vigor. "Assuredly Solomon my son shall reign after me," he promised Bathsheba. "Call me Zadok the priest and Benaiah."

Zadok and Benaiah immediately stood before the king to receive his orders.

"Take with you servants," David commanded Benaiah hastily, "and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule and bring him down to Gihon and let Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anoint him there king over Israel. And blow ye with the trumpet and say, 'God save King Solomon!' Then ye shall bring him up to sit on my throne, for he shall be king in my stead. I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah."

"Amen!" answered Benaiah. "As the Lord hath been with David so be He with Solomon."

Escorted by Nathan and Zadok and Benaiah and the king's Pelethites and Cherethites, Solomon on the king's own mule rode down to the west side of Jerusalem to the fountain Gihon. There Zadok anointed Solomon with the sacred oil taken from the tabernacle, and blew the trumpet, while the people shouted "Long live King Solomon!" Then with music and gayety they escorted the young man back to David's house.

Adonijah, feasting his followers, heard the uproar in the city, and as he wondered at its cause Abiathar's son, Jonathan, came hastily in.

"Verily," he exclaimed, "my lord King David hath made Solomon king."

To his astonished listeners he told the whole story of Solomon's coronation, and as they listened Adonijah's followers, trembling with fear, dropped away one after the other to their homes until Adonijah was left alone.

Chapter III—SOLOMON

WHEN David died after his reign of forty years, Solomon became sole king of Judah and Israel. Almost at once he put to death Joab and Adonijah and banished Abiathar from Jerusalem. Zadok was established as high priest, and Solomon with all his court went to the tabernacle at Gibeon, where the priests celebrated his accession with sacrifices and thanksgiving. When the ceremonies were over, Solomon stayed alone for the night to commune with God, and there God gave him the choice as to what Solomon should receive as a gift from God's hands. Solomon chose wisdom.

"Because thou hast asked this thing," the Lord answered, "I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, and I have also given thee both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days."

So Solomon began his reign with God's promise; and his reign was indeed the most splendid in Jewish history. His palace was built of cedars of Lebanon given by King Hiram of Phœnicia, and Solomon's throne was of ivory covered with gold. All of his eating and drinking utensils were of gold, and on them the king was served with all the dainties of the world, for Solomon established trade by sea and land with his neighbors.

When the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, with a great camel train laden with gifts for him, she was astonished at his magnificence.

"Behold," she exclaimed, "the half was not told me."

Besides his own palace, Solomon built the great temple on Mount Moriah for which David had prepared. It was in the style of Moses' tabernacle, but much larger and built of permanent material. Huge stones made its foundation, and the superstructure was of cedar wood covered with gold. It was set in a court called the Court of the Priests, and this court was surrounded by the Court of Israel. The temple building, like the tabernacle, was divided into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The doors were wonderfully carved and set with precious stones. All the temple vessels were of gold, and the altar and laver of brass. Before the temple were two tall brass pillars.

When the temple was finished, the priests placed in the new Holy of Holies the Ark of the Covenant which Moses had made in the wilderness, and all Israel held a service of thanksgiving. As Solomon prayed to God, fire came from

"WHEN THE QUEEN OF SHEBA CAME TO VISIT SOLOMON, SHE WAS ASTONISHED AT HIS MAGNIFICENCE"

heaven to light the sacrifice in the new great altar; and so once more God renewed His covenant with His people.

For many years Solomon ruled wisely and justly, devoting himself to his duties and to study. He knew the habits of beasts and birds and plants, and he knew the hearts of men, as he shows in the Book of Proverbs. His people loved him and were prosperous and happy.

But as the years went by, Solomon married many heathen wives and they made him forget his covenant with God. He lived only for pleasure, which he tells us in the Book of Ecclesiastes is vanity. Worse even than this, Solomon built on the Mount of Olives altars to the false gods of Moab and Ammon, and worshiped the Phœnician god Baal. Finally the Word of the Lord declared to Solomon that because he had not kept his covenant with God, he should not keep his kingdom either. After his death Jeroboam, a man of Ephraim, should snatch part of the kingdom away from Solomon's son Rehoboam.

Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam; but the young Ephraimite had heard from a prophet of his future greatness and fled to Egypt to escape Solomon's anger. He stayed there till Solomon died after a reign of forty years.

The Kings and the Prophets of the Divided Kingdom

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE BOOKS OF

I KINGS (XII-XXII) · II KINGS (I-XXV)
II CHRONICLES (X-XXXVI) · JOEL · OBADIAH
AMOS · HOSEA · JONAH · MICAH
ISAIAH · NAHUM · HABBAKUK
ZEPHANIAH

✠

KINGS OF JUDAH

REHOBOAM · ABIJAH · ASA · JEHOSHAPHAT · JEHORAM
AHAZIAH · JOASH · AMAZIAH · UZZIAH
JOTHAM · AHAZ · HEZEKIAH · MANASSEH · AMON
JOSIAH · JEHOAHAZ · JEHOIAKIM
JEHOIACHIN · ZEDEKIAH

KINGS OF ISRAEL

JEROBOAM · NADAB · BAASHA · ELAH · ZIMRI · OMRI
AHAB · AHAZIAH · JORAM · JEHU · JEHOAHAZ
JEHOASH · JEROBOAM II · ZACHARIAH
SHALLUM · MENAHEM · PEKAHIAH · PEKAH
HOSHEA

PROPHETS

ELIJAH · ELISHA · ISAIAH · HOSEA · JOEL · AMOS
OBADIAH · JONAH · MICAH · NAHUM
HABAKKUK · ZEPHANIAH
JEREMIAH

Chapter I—REHOBOAM, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—REHOBOAM
KING OF ISRAEL—JEROBOAM

REHOBOAM succeeded his father Solomon, and after his recognition at Jerusalem went up to Shechem to receive the allegiance of Israel. But Jeroboam was there before him at the head of a party ready to resist the new king.

"We will only serve thee," they said, "if thou wilt lighten the heavy load thy father laid upon us."

Rehoboam asked for three days to consider the demand, and in the three days asked the advice of the old men of the kingdom, who counseled him to yield to the demand, and of the younger men, whose counsel was to treat Jeroboam with contempt. That advice Rehoboam followed.

"My father hath chastised you with whips," Rehoboam said to Jeroboam at the end of the three days, "but I will chastise you with scorpions."

"See to thine own house," replied the rebels to Rehoboam, and turned to their followers with the war cry, "To your tents, O Israel!"

Thus the break came that Ahijah had foretold. Judah and Benjamin held to David's grandson; the other ten tribes, with Ephraim at their head, made a separate kingdom and chose Jeroboam as their king.

As the new kingdom was cut off from worshiping at Jerusalem, in place of the temple Jeroboam built one altar at Bethel and one at Dan, and for each of these high places he made a calf as a god.

"Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," he said.

As the Levites refused to serve as priests to idols, Jeroboam was obliged to make priests out of any one who would degrade himself to take the office.

One day as Jeroboam stood in the high place at Bethel, offering a sacrifice to the golden calf, a prophet came to him out of Judah.

"O altar, altar!" he cried. "Behold a child shall be born of the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests that burn incense upon thee."

"Lay hold on him," Jeroboam said in anger to his servants, stretching out his arm toward the prophet.

But suddenly Jeroboam's outstretched arm became stiff, and the altar itself split down the middle and poured its fire upon the ground.

"Pray for me," begged the frightened king, "that my hand may be restored."

The prophet healed the king, but refused his presents and his invitation to go home to dinner with him, for God had told him not to eat in any house of Samaria.

Hot and hungry and tired, after he had gone a little way on his journey home, he sat down under an oak tree to rest, and there a man who was a false prophet found him and gave him a second invitation to dinner. Again the Judean prophet said that the Lord had forbidden him to eat in Samaria.

"I am a prophet also as thou art," lied the older man, "and an angel spake to me, saying, 'Bring him back that he may eat bread and drink water.' "

The prophet forgot for the moment that God's word came to him directly and not through another man's mouth, and went home with the false prophet. But as they sat at the table the Lord spoke to him in rebuke, and at once he arose and departed on an ass that his host lent him.

Before he had gone far a fierce lion crashed out of the woods and struck the man from his donkey. He did not hurt the ass, but stood beside it looking down on the body of the man he had killed. A passer-by, seeing the strange sight, hurried to town with the news.

"It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the Lord," said the false prophet, and saddling his ass he rode out to where the dead man lay and brought him back to the city and buried him in his own sepulchre. And when later the old man died, he was laid in the same tomb.

In the meantime Rehoboam in Judah had begun his reign well. He had worshiped in the temple, improved the royal city, and built throughout his kingdom strong walled cities which he garrisoned with his best forces. But before he had reigned five years he had forgotten his real inheritance as king of Judah and cared only for the pleasures of life.

When Judah and Israel had been one they made formidable neighbors to Syria and to Egypt. Now, split into two kingdoms, they were an easier prey to any invader. In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign Shishak, king of Egypt, coveting the great wealth of Rehoboam, marched his armies of twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horse, and foot without number, up through the wilderness of Shur to attack the fenced cities of Judah. Rehoboam had thought them impregnable when he built them, but "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman

waketh but in vain," and they made no stand at all against Egypt's advance. One after another fell before the invading army until Shishak stood close to the gates of Jerusalem.

Rehoboam made no attempt to repulse this first foreign invasion of the kingdom, but in cowardly fashion hid in his capital with his princes and chief men, and let Shishak march into Jerusalem and strip it of its wealth. On his departure he carried with him much treasure from Solomon's palace, five hundred gold shields and many gold cups and utensils from the temple.

For twelve years after this Rehoboam reigned in Jerusalem, always quarreling with Jeroboam. When he died his son Abijah succeeded him.

Chapter II—ABIJAH, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—ABIJAH
KING OF ISRAEL—JEROBOAM

ABIJAH in the three years of his reign carried on his father's quarrel with Jeroboam. Although Jeroboam's army was larger and better equipped than his own, Abijah, relying on God for help, felt no fear when he met Jeroboam in battle.

"The Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom to David forever," he cried to the Israelitish host, "yet Jeroboam hath rebelled, and ye have cast out the priests of the Lord. But as for us, the Lord is our God and we have not forsaken Him, and our priests are sons of Aaron, and God is with us for our captain, and His priests have sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight not against the Lord God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper."

The Israelites, not heeding Abijah's warning, threw themselves against the army of Judah. Abijah's priests sounded their trumpets, and with brave hearts the men charged Jeroboam's great army which fled before them.

For the rest of Abijah's reign Jeroboam was humbled. When Abijah died his son Asa succeeded him.

Chapter III—ASA, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—ASA
KINGS OF ISRAEL—JEROBOAM, NADAB, BAASHA, ELAH, ZIMRI, OMRI, AHAB

SOON after Asa came to the throne Jeroboam died and was succeeded by his son Nadab. Nadab after a reign of three years was killed by his own commander-in-chief Baasha, who made himself king of Israel. Baasha was not friendly to Asa as Nadab had been.

The Ethiopians invaded Judah in Asa's reign with a huge army, but Asa with fewer men had God for his strength, and in that power scattered the invaders like chaff. Impressed with this proof of God's greatness, Asa, after he had driven out the foe, set to work at once to destroy all the idols in Judah and Benjamin and to stop all idol worship. Asa took the idols away from his own mother, who was a heathen princess, and allowed her no longer to be called queen.

Then Asa made new temple utensils to replace those that Shishak had carried off, and in Jerusalem ordered a great feast which was celebrated by all Judah and also by the faithful Jews in the kingdom of Israel. With shouting and trumpets and cornets the people vowed to serve with all their hearts the God of their fathers.

As long as Asa and his kingdom kept their vow they prospered, but finally they grew careless again, and when Baasha seized a city of Benjamin and fortified it as a place of attack against Judah, Asa—forgetting that it was God alone who had helped him against the Ethiopian invasion—sent to Benhadad, king of Syria, and begged him to drive Baasha out of the city he was fortifying.

Benhadad allied himself with Asa and drove Baasha back to his own kingdom, where he soon died and was succeeded by his son Elah. Elah reigned only two years, for Zimri, one of his captains, killed Elah, as Elah's father had killed Nadah, and proclaimed himself king. Zimri reigned just seven days before Omri, the commander-in-chief of the army, killed Zimri and was proclaimed king by all Israel. Omri changed the capital of Israel from Tirzah to Samaria and made the new city very beautiful. He reigned twelve years, and when he died his son Ahab succeeded him.

Asa reigned on in Judah through all these disturbances that were taking place in Israel, but his great prosperity was at an end. A prophet rebuked him for his lack of faith in turning from the Lord to Syria for help in trouble, and Asa, instead of accepting the reproof and turning once more to God, seized the prophet

and threw him into prison. Then, without God as his strength, Asa spent the rest of his days in quarrels with his neighbors. At last he became very sick, and in his illness sought not to the Lord but to the physicians.

In the third year of Ahab's reign in Israel, Asa died and was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat.

Chapter IV—JEHOSHAPHAT, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—JEHOSHAPHAT
KINGS OF ISRAEL—AHAB, AHAZIAH, JORAM

I. THE ONE PROPHET OF GOD IN ISRAEL

AHAB in Israel, married to Jezebel, a Phœnician princess, had already established in his kingdom the worship of the Phœnician God Baal when Jehoshaphat came to the throne of Judah. Jehoshaphat at once set to work to root out of Judah the idol worship which had gained ground in the last days of Asa. When he had restored the true religion, he enlarged his army, strengthened his walled cities, and opened trade with other nations. He made his kingdom so powerful that every one was anxious to buy his favor and no one dared to attack him.

In the meantime Ahab, under Jezebel's influence, was killing God's prophets and giving power and riches to the prophets of Baal. There was one man among the true prophets, Elijah, whom Jezebel especially hated, but she had not been able to kill him.

Elijah stands in Jewish history along with Abraham and Moses. Clothed in a sheepskin coat fastened with a leather girdle, his hair hanging loose, Elijah dwelt alone in the wilderness, mourning Israel's sins.

Whenever God's word came to him he obeyed it boldly, appearing suddenly before the king or queen with his message and then as abruptly leaving them. Now God sent him to Ahab to declare that for three years there should be a famine in Israel. Elijah delivered his decree, once more escaped Jezebel, and went down to the brook Cherith to live through the famine. The ravens brought him food there and he drank the water of the brook, until after a time it dried up. Then, obeying God's word, Elijah traveled to the city of Zerephath in Phœnicia, where outside the city gate he met a woman gathering a few dry twigs.

"Fetch me, I pray thee," Elijah said to her, "a little water in a vessel that I may drink," and as the woman turned to obey his request he added, "bring me also, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand."

Then the woman stopped. "As the Lord thy God liveth," she answered earnestly, "I have not a cake in the house; only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse; and behold I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and cook it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die."

Elijah, who had been fed by ravens, knew that God has always food for those who obey and trust Him, so he answered confidently.

"Fear not," he said, "go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.' "

Although she was not a Jew but a woman of a foreign nation, she obeyed Elijah. She took the prophet home with her and gave him the "roof-chamber," which was always the guest room and the best furnished in the house. When she had made him comfortable she went down stairs to bake a cake for her visitor out of the little meal and oil left her. And when she had fed the prophet and looked again into her barrel and jug, behold there was left plenty to feed herself and her little son.

For two years Elijah dwelt in the little room of the widow's house, and all that time the meal barrel was never empty nor did the cruse of oil fail. But one day the little boy fell ill and presently he died. His mother, forgetting all that Elijah had done for her, turned on him with reproaches.

"What have I to do with thee, thou man of God," she cried. "Art thou come to slay my son?"

Elijah did not answer her railing. Quietly he stretched out his arms and said, "Give me thy son."

He took the child from his weeping mother, carried it up to his little room and laid it upon his own bed, while he prayed to the God whose ears are always open to the prayer of His people.

"O Lord, my God," he cried, "I pray thee let this child's soul come into him again."

While the prophet prayed, the child revived, and Elijah, joyous in heart, lifted the boy, well and strong again, and carried him down to his mother and put him into her arms.

"See, thy son liveth," he said simply.

"ELIJAH DWELT ALONE IN THE WILDERNESS. THE RAVENS BROUGHT HIM FOOD AND HE DRANK THE WATER OF THE BROOK"

The widow of Zarephath held her child close and looked at the prophet out of eyes moist with gratitude and repentance.

"Now by this I know," she said, "that thou art a man of God and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."

II. THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY PROPHETS OF BAAL IN ISRAEL

FOR three years Elijah stayed in Zarephath before God's word came to him again.

"Go show thyself unto Ahab," it said, "and I will send rain upon the earth."

The famine had been very severe through Israel, and it had grown so bad now that even the royal household was suffering for food. Obadiah, Ahab's steward, had up to this time kept the king's table supplied, and he had, moreover, been able to feed from his own resources one hundred prophets whom he had saved from Jezebel. But now the flocks and herds were suffering for pasture and Ahab was troubled.

"Go into the land," Ahab said to Obadiah, "unto all the fountains of water and unto all brooks; peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts."

Ahab laid out two routes through the kingdom; one he took himself and one he gave to Obadiah, that between them they might cover the whole country. Ahab went his way and Obadiah his. As Obadiah walked alone, meditating on the condition of Israel, he lifted his eyes, and there in his path stood Elijah, the prophet. Obadiah knew him at once and fell on his face to do Elijah reverence.

"Art thou not my lord Elijah?" he asked.

"I am," answered Elijah. "Go tell thy lord, 'Behold Elijah is here.' "

Obadiah rose in protest. "What have I sinned," he exclaimed, "that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab to slay me? As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to kill thee; and when they said, 'He is not there,' he took an oath to destroy the kingdom and nation where they found thee not. And now thou sayest, 'Go tell thy lord, "Behold Elijah is here." ' And it shall come to pass as soon as I am gone from thee that the spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me; but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's

prophets by fifty in a cave and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, 'Go tell thy lord, "Behold Elijah is here" ' and he shall slay me."

"As the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I stand," promised Elijah solemnly, "I will surely show myself unto Ahab to-day."

Obadiah, reassured, neglected his search for pasture to hurry after Ahab to give to him Elijah's message. Ahab received it in silence, but turned at once to meet Elijah, who was waiting for him.

"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Ahab asked roughly.

"I have not troubled Israel," Elijah answered, "it is thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty."

Ahab instead of seizing Elijah obeyed his command. He sent through all the kingdom an order that the four hundred and fifty priests of the heathen god Baal whom Ahab and Jezebel had allowed in the land should gather at Mount Carmel on the shore of the Mediterranean at the northern end of the great plain of Jezreel, where the Jews had fought so many battles. With the prophets of Baal came also all Israel to see what was going to happen. Elijah faced the great host.

Solemnly he watched them, and then solemnly he put his searching question.

"How long halt ye between two opinions?" he asked. "If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

He paused, but the people answered him not a word. Elijah spoke again.

"I, even I only," he said, "remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces and lay it on wood and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God."

Then the people found their voices. "It is well spoken," they cried.

Elijah turned fearlessly to the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal. "Choose you one bullock for yourselves and dress it first, for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under."

The priests made ready their sacrifice, laid it on the cold altar, and began to call on their god to accept the sacrifice. From morning to noon they cried, "O Baal, hear us," and leaped on their altar and in their frenzy cut themselves with their knives. But the sacrifice remained unlit and Baal did not answer.

"Cry aloud," said Elijah, "for he is a god; either he is talking or he is pursuing or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be wakened."

Stung by the taunts, the heathen priests cried the louder. From noon to evening they cried, but there was no voice nor sign in reply.

When the evening was come Elijah spoke again to the people.

"Come near unto me," he commanded, and they obeyed.

Elijah went to the altar which had once been raised to the Lord but which was now broken down. With twelve stones, one for each tribe of the Jews, he repaired the altar and dug around it a deep trench. Then he laid the wood on the altar and the second bullock which had been killed for the sacrifice.

"Fill four barrels with water and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood," he commanded. And when the servants had obeyed, he said, "Do it the second time," and then, "Do it the third time."

When the altar had thus been three times drenched with water so that it ran off and filled the trench around it, Elijah drew near to pray.

"Lord God of Abraham," he said, "of Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again."

As Elijah ceased there fell upon the Lord's altar, fire which licked up the water and consumed the sacrifice and the wood and the stones and then dried up also all the water in the trench. Elijah stood silent, but all Israel fell on their faces in repentance and fear.

"The Lord, He is the God! The Lord, He is the God!" they cried.

"Take the prophets of Baal," commanded Elijah sternly. "Let not one of them escape."

The repentant Israelites seized the false prophets and led them down Mount Carmel to the river Kishon that flowed at its foot. Here they were executed.

Then Elijah turned to Ahab. "Get thee up," he said, "eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain."

Stricken with awe, like his people, Ahab made no attempt to lay hand on Elijah, but where he was sat down to eat and drink. Elijah with one servant went back to the peak of Carmel, where he could overlook the Mediterranean.

"Go up now, look toward the sea," he commanded the servant, while he himself sat on the ground.

The servant looked out over the smooth sea and the cloudless sky and returned. "There is nothing," he reported.

"Go again," commanded Elijah, and the servant went and came back with the same report.

"Go again," said Elijah.

Finally when he had been seven times to look out over the Mediterranean the servant came back again. "Behold," he said, "there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea like a man's hand."

Elijah arose. "Go," he commanded, "and say to Ahab 'Prepare thy chariot and get thee down that the rain stop thee not.' "

Although there had been no rain in Israel for three years, and although to Ahab there was still no sign of rain, he had seen too much that day to disregard Elijah's command. He mounted his chariot and set out for the city of Jezreel, where there was a royal palace.

As Ahab started, the power of the Lord came to Elijah. He knotted his leather girdle tightly together and through the rain ran before the king's chariot until it reached the gates of the city of Jezreel.

III. ELIJAH'S MANTLE

AHAB in Jezreel at once told Jezebel what Elijah had done on Mount Carmel and the impression it had made on him. The only effect it had on Jezebel was to rouse in her a fierce anger against the man who had slain the prophets of Baal.

Without losing time Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah outside the city gates. "Thus saith the queen," announced the messenger, " 'So let the gods do to me and more also if I make not thy life as the life of one of Baal's prophets by to-morrow about this time.' "

Elijah had come from a deed that had exalted him to power and strength; he had not eaten when Ahab had; he had run before Ahab's chariot all the way to Jezreel. Now when he heard Jezebel's message he fell suddenly from his height of inspiration to the depths of discouragement. Without waiting to hear God's word, he fled before the word of Jezebel, down through Ephraim and Benjamin and Judah to the city of Beer-sheba. There he left his servant while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and sat down under a juniper tree to give way to his despair.

"It is enough, O Lord," he cried. "Take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

Then in the depth of his weariness and discouragement he lay down and slept until an angel, sent to encourage him, touched him lightly on the arm.

"Arise and eat," said the angel.

Elijah looked to see a fire burning near him with a cake baked on the coals

and a jug of water standing by. He arose, ate and drank, and silently lay down again to sleep.

Once more the angel spoke to him. "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee."

Elijah rose again to eat and drink, and in the strength of that food that God had sent he went forty days and forty nights without eating, as he journeyed further down through the country to Midian and came at length to Mt. Horeb, where God had spoken in days long past out of the burning bush to Moses.

Elijah found a cave in Horeb and went in to hide himself. While he sat there, mourning still in discouragement, God spoke to him.

"What doest thou here, Elijah?" He asked.

Elijah tried to justify his flight. "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts," he answered, "for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

"Go forth and stand upon the Mount before the Lord," came the command.

Elijah obeyed. As he stood solitary upon the lonely mountain waiting for the Lord, there came first a terrible wind which dislodged great rocks and sent them crashing down the mountain side. But the Lord was not in the wind.

Then came an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. Then as amid all the turmoil Elijah still waited, there came a still, small voice that asked again the first question, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Elijah, knowing then that it was the voice of the Lord, wrapped his face in his mantle and stood at the entrance of his cave. "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts," he repeated, "because the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."

"Go," commanded the Lord, "return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

Elijah left Horeb behind him and started north again until he reached the Jordan and then went up along the Jordan valley. He did not get far enough

to find Jehu, a general in Israel, or Hazael, a general in Syria, but on the edge of the plain of Jezreel, near to the spot where Gideon had defeated the Midianites, Elijah found Elisha ploughing in his father's field. As he passed the young man, Elijah without a word took off his own mantle, threw it over Elisha's shoulders and passed on.

Elisha understood at once what the act meant, for it was a common symbol in the east with a prophet or teacher in choosing his successor. Elisha left his oxen therefore standing in the furrow and ran after Elijah.

"Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother," he begged, "and then I will follow thee."

"Go back again," Elijah acceded.

Elisha made his farewells, offered a sacrifice to God, and then followed his new master, ready to serve him in any way he could. And this is the last time for many years that we hear of Elijah in public life.

IV. NABOTH'S VINEYARD

THE better feeling which the scene at Carmel had wakened in Ahab passed away as the years went by and left Ahab as fully as ever under Jezebel's influence.

Benhadad II of Syria invaded his kingdom and Ahab bought a disgraceful peace. Then in his palace in Jezreel Ahab did still worse a deed.

The palace was built along the city wall and next to it was the vineyard of a man named Naboth. Whenever Ahab looked at this strip of land he coveted it. Many times he offered to buy it but Naboth always refused. Finally in his childish sulkiness Ahab refused to eat and took to his bed. Jezebel in surprise asked what was the matter.

"Naboth will not give me his vineyard," Ahab said.

"Dost thou govern the kingdom of Israel?" Jezebel asked. "Arise and eat bread. I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth."

Jezebel wrote to the nobles of Israel an order to proclaim a feast and at the feast to accuse Naboth of treason, and execute him without trial. This order she signed with Ahab's name and stamped with the royal seal. The nobles who received the order obeyed it. They accused Naboth by the mouth of false witnesses, convicted him of treason, and stoned him outside the city gates.

"Arise," Jezebel said to Ahab, "take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, for Naboth is dead."

Followed by two of his generals, Jehu and Bidkar, Ahab rode in his chariot

to inspect his new possession, and on the way met Elijah, whom he had been glad to forget.

"Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Ahab asked bitterly.

"I have found thee," answered the stern Elijah. "Because thou hast sold thyself to work evil, thy house shall become like the house of Baasha. In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, and as for Jezebel, the dogs shall eat her by the walls of Jezreel, for there is none like unto Ahab whom Jezebel his wife stirred up, who sold himself to work wickedness and did very abominably in following idols."

Elijah left Ahab with his usual abruptness, and Ahab went back to his palace, trying to forget the prophet's words.

V. THE ARROW SHOT AT A VENTURE

IT was three years since Israel had made peace with Syria, and as Syria was just now busy maintaining itself against Assyria, Ahab decided that it would be a good time to take back some of the cities across Jordan which Benhadad had taken from him. He prepared for war, but not feeling quite certain of his own strength, he asked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to be his ally.

To Jehoshaphat it seemed a good thing to have an alliance between Judah and Israel, and without waiting to ask wisdom of God, he not only promised to help Ahab against Benhadad but gave his son Jehoram in marriage to Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. By this act Jehoshaphat, good king though he was, proved to be the first cause of the future destruction of Judah, for into a kingdom which he had cleansed of idols, he opened the way by which a heathen queen might enter and rule.

The two kings led their armies in person against Benhadad, though Ahab disguised himself in the dress of a common soldier, for he knew that Benhadad's chief effort would be against himself. That was true; the Syrian king gave orders to his captains that they should not consider anything less than the capture of the king of Israel.

But the Syrian captains could not find Ahab, for he was not in his kingly robes. They pursued Jehoshaphat at first, though they gave over the chase when Jehoshaphat cried out that he was the king of Judah. Then the battle went on as best it might.

Finally a common soldier did what the captains could not do. He fitted his arrow to his bow and, without special aim, sent it flying into the army of Israel where, piercing a joint of Ahab's coat of mail, it wounded the king fatally. More

kingly in his death than in his life, Ahab, in spite of his wound, stood in his chariot directing his troops while the blood poured from his wound. At evening he died.

Without a leader, the army of Israel could not hold together. Panic stricken, they scattered to their homes, while Jehoshaphat recrossed the Jordan and went back to Jerusalem.

Ahab was carried back to Samaria and buried with honor. As his servants washed his chariot in the pool outside the city walls, the blood of Ahab ran down to the ground and the dogs licked it up, not knowing that in doing so they were fulfilling Elijah's stern prophecy.

Ahab's son Ahaziah succeeded his father on the throne of Israel.

VI. THE BATTLE OF THE SINGERS

JEHOSHAPHAT came back to his own kingdom to find trouble awaiting him. Mesha, king of Moab, a vassal of Judah, had been harrying Edom in Jehoshaphat's absence and now advanced against Jerusalem itself.

Jehoshaphat, repenting his rash alliance with Israel, turned this time to God for counsel and help. He proclaimed a fast in Jerusalem, and when men from all Judah had gathered in Solomon's temple, Jehoshaphat stood in the midst of the congregation and prayed to God.

"O Lord God of our fathers," he said, "in thine hand is there not power and might? We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, but our eyes are upon thee."

"Hearken ye, all Judah, and thou king Jehoshaphat," came the word of the Lord. "Be not afraid by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but the Lord's. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourselves and see the salvation of the Lord. Fear not nor be dismayed. To-morrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you."

Jehoshaphat and all the congregation fell on their knees and thanked God, while the Kohathites sang Psalms of praise. The next morning when Jehoshaphat formed his army for the march, he placed in the forefront these same singers who, as they went, sang with clear voices, "Praise ye the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever." Behind them marched the soldiers with heads high and hearts steady.

When they reached Engedi where the Moabites had camped, and coming out upon the plateau looked down upon the camp, they found that indeed their victory for which they had sung praise was already won for them. The army of Moab,

quarreling with the men of Ammon, who were their allies, had come at last to open fight, and the two enemies of Judah had destroyed each other while the singing army was on the march.

Jehoshaphat's men went down into the overthrown camp and found so much treasure that it took three days to carry it all away. With the treasure they went back to Jerusalem to praise God again in the temple for His wonderful deliverance.

VII. THE FIERY CHARIOT

AHAZIAH, son of Ahab, had a reign of only two years in Israel. When he died, as he left no son, he was succeeded by his brother Joram.

It was in Joram's reign that Elijah finished his work in Israel. Knowing that the end was coming, Elijah went back to the school of the prophets at Gilgal where he had left Elisha. There were a good many of these schools scattered through the land; one was at Bethel, another at Jericho, and many of them had been in existence since Samuel's time. In them young men were instructed in religion to make them fit to become teachers or prophets.

"Tarry here," he said to Elisha. "The Lord hath sent me to Bethel."

Elisha knew that it would be Elijah's last journey. "As the Lord liveth, I will not leave thee," he answered, and went on to Bethel with his master.

As they neared the town the young men of the school came out to meet them. "Knowest thou," they asked Elisha secretly, "that the Lord will take away thy master to-day?"

"Yea, I know it," Elisha answered. "Hold ye your peace."

In Bethel Elijah spoke again. "Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho."

"As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth," answered Elisha, "I will not leave thee."

As they approached Jericho the young men from that school came out to greet them. "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master to-day?" they asked Elisha.

"Yea. I know it," he answered. "Hold thy peace."

Once more Elijah tried to make Elisha stay behind. "Tarry, I pray thee, here, for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan."

But Elisha again answered, "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee."

And the two went on together toward Jordan. Behind them followed the fifty young men of the school.

"THEY THREW THEIR TAUNTS AGAINST ELISHA. BUT THERE CAME OUT OF THE WOODS TWO BEARS THAT CHASED THE ROUGH CROWD"

Elijah and Elisha went alone down to the river while the others stood afar off. As they reached the brim of the water Elijah took off that mantle he had once dropped on Elisha's shoulders and with it smote the Jordan. The waters rolled back, as they had for Joshua, and the old and the young prophet walked across the river bed dry shod, leaving the young men gazing after them from the west bank.

When they had reached the east bank the waters rolled back again, and Elijah turned to his pupil. "Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee," he said.

Elisha knew that the hour had come when he must in reality accept Elijah's mantle and go forward alone to do the work of the Lord. His great desire was for wisdom.

"Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me," he cried.

"Thou hast asked a hard thing," said Elijah solemnly; "nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee."

They walked on then talking earnestly in these last moments together, and suddenly before them, sweeping down through the heavens, appeared a chariot of fire with horses of fire.

"My father, my father!" Elisha cried. "The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"

But Elijah did not answer. The chariot drove between them where they stood, and catching up Elijah as in a whirlwind carried him in its sweep up from the earth.

Elisha saw him no more, but Elijah's mantle was on the ground where it had fallen, and Elisha had seen him depart.

He picked up the mantle and faced back again toward the river. When he reached the brim, with Elijah's mantle he smote the waters, and again they parted to let him through. So he came back to the sons of the prophets who had waited on the west bank.

When they saw him coming they murmured to each other, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha," and ran forward to bow to the ground before him as to a master.

While Elisha stayed in Jericho he made sweet for the city the waters of a bitter spring that no one could drink. Then he started north over the same route which he had traveled with Elijah. As he came near to Bethel the rough youths of the city met him. They had heard of Elijah's ascent in the chariot, and having little knowledge of Elijah's God or respect for Him, they threw their taunts against Elisha, God's prophet, asking why he too did not go up in a chariot.

"Go up, thou bald head! Go up, thou bald head!" they cried after him jeeringly, although Elisha was a young man.

Elisha turned and rebuked them and then went his way. But there came out of the woods two bears that chased the rough crowd of youths and hurt many of them before they could escape.

The last important act of Jehoshaphat's reign was an alliance with Joram and the king of Edom against Moab. The three kings defeated Mesha and forced him again to pay tribute. The rest of Jehoshaphat's reign was peaceful and prosperous, and when he died, after a reign of twenty-five years, he was buried with the greatest honors in the royal sepulchre in Jerusalem. He was succeeded by his son Jehoram.

Chapter V—JEHORAM, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—JEHORAM
KING OF ISRAEL—JORAM

I. ELISHA WITH ELIJAH'S MANTLE

IN the last years of Jehoshaphat's life he had associated with him his son Jehoram in governing the kingdom, but even then it was so apparent that Jehoram's wife, the daughter of Jezebel, would rule him for ill as Jezebel had ruled Ahab, that Elijah before his translation had sent to Jehoram a remonstrance in writing.

"Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father," Elijah said, " 'Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, but hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, behold with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people and thy children and thy wives and all thy goods."

When Jehoram became king in his own right his first act was to kill all of his brothers and those of the princes of Judah who were their friends and to strengthen the alliance between Judah and Israel. His wife, Athaliah, soon showed that she meant to do in Judah what Jezebel had done in Israel. Jezebel had built a temple to Baal in Samaria and given it priests and ritual; Athaliah pulled down part of the temple walls in Jerusalem and with the material built a temple to Baal, furnishing it with sacred utensils from the temple. Jehoram took no steps to prevent this sacrilege.

But while Athaliah was thus reducing Judah to the idolatry of Samaria, Elisha was preaching in Israel the one God and working by His power. Elisha did not dwell in the wilderness away from men, as Elijah had done, but he had a house in the city of Samaria where he lived with his servant Gehazi. From thence he took long journeys through the kingdom. But whether he was at home or abroad, he showed himself always ready and able to help any one in need. Elijah's mantle had not fallen on him in vain.

His first kind deed after Elijah's translation had been to sweeten the bitter waters of Jericho. Sometime after this a widow of one of the young prophets came to him for help.

"Thy servant my husband is dead," she said, "and I have naught. Therefore the creditor is come to take my two sons to be bondmen."

"Tell me," said Elisha, "what hast thou in the house?"

"Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil," she answered hopelessly.

"Go borrow the vessels of all thy neighbors; borrow not a few," Elisha commanded, "and shut the door upon thee and thy sons, and pour thine oil into all those vessels."

The woman trusted Elisha. She sent her two boys to borrow all the empty jars they could, and when they brought them to her, she shut the door and began to fill them. Though she thought she had only a little oil, she had plenty to fill every vessel she had borrowed. The oil stopped running only when the last jar was full. Amazed, she went to tell Elisha.

"Go," Elisha said, "sell the oil, pay thy debt and live, thou and thy children, on the rest."

Elisha went often to Mt. Carmel, and this journey took him through Shunem, a city of Issacher, near to the battle-field where Saul had died. The first time Elisha went through, he stopped to eat with a rich woman of the town who was so hospitable that she told Elisha he must always stay with her on his journeys, and finally she induced her husband to build a roof-chamber especially for Elisha, where he might come whenever he wished.

When Elisha found this room furnished with a bed and table and chair and light, he was very grateful and sent for his hostess.

"Behold," he said, "thou hast been careful for me; what is to be done for thee?"

"I dwell among mine own people," answered the woman. "I lack nothing."

But presently through Gehazi Elisha learned that like Sarah and Hannah in times of old, the Shunemite woman longed for a son, and then Elisha promised

her that a son should be born to her. The baby came by and by and made the woman and her husband very happy.

When the little lad was big enough to run about by himself he went out one day with his father into the fields to watch the reapers work where the sun was very hot.

"My head, my head!" he cried suddenly to his father.

"Carry him to his mother," the father said to one of his servants.

The little boy sat on his mother's lap until noontime and then he died. Without a word she took her son up to the prophet's chamber—for Elisha had gone to Carmel—laid him on the bed, closed the door, and came down again to her husband.

"Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men and an ass, that I may run to the man of God at Carmel and come again."

"Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day?" he asked in surprise.

"It shall be well," the woman answered. She knew that Elisha's God who had given her her son could preserve him to her, and she would not even tell her husband that the child was dead till she had asked Elisha to pray for her.

The asses were saddled. "Go forward," the woman said to the servant; "slack not thy riding except I bid thee."

So at the swiftest pace the animals could take the Shunemite woman and her servant came to Carmel. Elisha saw her coming.

"Behold," Elisha said to Gehazi, "yonder is the Shunemite. Run now and meet her, I pray thee, and say unto her, 'Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?' "

"It is well," answered the woman to Gehazi, for she still was sure God could give her back her child. But when she reached Elisha she threw herself on the ground before him in supplication for her boy's life.

"Gird up thy loins," Elisha said to Gehazi, "and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way; if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again; and lay my staff upon the face of the child."

Then when Gehazi was gone, the mother and Elisha rose up to follow. As they neared Shunem they met Gehazi coming back.

"The child is not awakened," Gehazi said.

They passed into the house and Elisha, alone, went to his upper room where the child lay on his bed. He shut the door and prayed unto the Lord. It was a long time that he prayed before the little boy opened his eyes. Then Elisha unclosed the door and sent Gehazi for the mother. She came in, bowing before the

prophet in gratitude, before she gathered her son into her arms and took him with her back to her own room.

Elisha left Shunem when the child was well and went south again to the school of the prophets at Gilgal. One of the young men had been out in the fields gathering herbs for the stew for dinner, and as Elisha came in, and the great pot was put on the fire to boil, the man threw in his herbs, among them some wild gourds that they had not tasted before.

When the pottage was served and they were eating, some one suddenly cried out, "O, thou man of God, there is death in the pot," and every one stopped eating the poisonous gourds and looked at Elisha.

"Then bring meal," Elisha announced calmly, and when he had thrown it into the stew he said, "Pour out for the people that they may eat," and when the sons of the prophets tasted this time the pottage was wholesome.

While Elisha was still at Gilgal some one brought him as a present twenty loaves of barley bread and some corn. Elisha turned to his servant.

"Give unto the people that they may eat," he said.

"What," asked Gehazi, "should I set this small portion before one hundred men?"

"Give the people that they may eat," repeated Elisha, "for thus saith the Lord, 'They shall eat and leave thereof.' "

Silenced, the servant put the bread and corn on the table, and when the sons of the prophets had eaten all they wished, there still remained food over.

All these miracles Elisha did by the power of God for the help of his fellowmen, while Jehoram in Judah and Joram in Israel were setting up altars to Baal.

II. ELISHA AND NAAMAN

ALTHOUGH Benhadad of Syria had it always in mind to attack Samaria once more and take it, he was too busy defending himself from Assyria, north of him, to have time for any real expedition against Israel. From time to time marauding parties swept down from Syria upon Israel, carrying off what they were able to take. One of these incursions was led by Naaman, one of Benhadad's best generals, and among other booty that he carried back to Syria was a little Jewish maid whom he gave to his wife as a servant.

Sadly for Naaman, he was a leper. In Syria lepers were not shut off as they were in Israel although they were very unfortunate and miserable. Naaman was a good man and he and his wife were very kind to the little maid. When she had been with them some time she began to love them and grew every day more sorry

" 'WOULD GOD, MY LORD WAS WITH THE PROPHET THAT IS IN SAMARIA,' SHE SAID, 'FOR HE WOULD RECOVER HIM OF HIS LEPROSY' "

for Naaman. She remembered all that Elisha had done in Israel, and at last she ventured to speak to her mistress.

"Would God, my lord was with the prophet that is in Samaria," she said, "for he would recover him of his leprosy."

At once Naaman's wife told him of what the little girl had said, and Naaman in his eagerness to be rid of his disease repeated it to Benhadad, the king.

"I will send a letter unto the king of Israel," Benhadad promised, and gave the letter to Naaman, who carried it to Joram with a gift of ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of raiment.

Joram read the letter through. "Now when this letter is come unto thee," it ended, "behold, I have herewith sent Naaman my servant to thee that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy," for Benhadad did not know about Elisha and expected Joram to work the miracle.

Joram rent his clothes in despair. "Am I God that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" he exclaimed. "Consider how he seeketh a quarrel against me."

The king's anxiety was so great that the news of it ran through the city and came to Elisha in his house. At once he sent his servant to Joram with a message.

"Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes?" he said. "Let the man come now to me and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

Joram, relieved, sent the Syrian general to Elisha's little house, and Naaman with his chariot and horses and retinue came and stood before the door. Elisha did not go himself to speak to Naaman; he sent a messenger.

"Go and wash in Jordan seven times and thy flesh shall come again to thee and thou shalt be clean," said the messenger.

Naaman looked at the man haughtily. Naaman was a powerful Syrian who had condescended to come to a humble prophet of Israel; he had expected the prophet to appreciate the honor and to be humble before him. But Elisha not only sent a servant with a message instead of coming himself to speak to Naaman, but also gave him this paltry and humiliating task; why should he bathe in a river of Israel!

"Behold," he said to his men, "I thought he surely would come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leprosy! Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Syria, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?"

In a rage Naaman turned his chariot from the prophet's door and rode away. But one of his officers was bold enough to plead with him.

"My father," he said, "if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing,

wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, 'Wash and be clean.' "

Naaman's anger had cooled enough to listen to this reasoning. He turned toward the Jordan and, subduing his pride, in childlike humility and obedience dipped seven times in the water according to Elisha's word. And as he came out the last time, every trace of his disease was gone and his skin was like his heart, clean as a child's.

Gratefully eager to acknowledge his healing, Naaman went back to Elisha. This time Elisha came out to receive him and Gehazi came too.

"Behold," Naaman said, "now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, take a gift from thy servant."

"I will receive none," Elisha answered firmly, and though Naaman urged it, he still refused, until Naaman gave up his attempt to make the prophet take the gold and silver and costly garments he had brought with him.

"Shall there then," he asked, "be given thy servant two mules' burden of earth from Israel to build an altar in Syria, for henceforth thy servant will offer sacrifices only unto the Lord. But when my master, Benhadad, goeth into the temple of Rimmon to worship and he leaneth on my hand and I bow myself in the temple of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing."

"Go in peace," answered Elisha, knowing that Naaman's allegiance to his king made it necessary for him still to accompany Benhadad to the temple of Rimmon, but that if Naaman meant really to serve the one God he would presently find out for himself that he could not bow the knee to false gods.

Naaman, healed, turned back toward Damascus. Gehazi had heard the conversation and had wondered how his master could refuse the Syrian's rich gifts. Although Gehazi had lived so long with Elisha, his heart was not right with the Lord; he coveted the material riches that Elisha refused and thought that he might still get some of it. As Elisha had gone again into his house, Gehazi set out at the top of his speed to catch Naaman.

Naaman heard him running and looked around. Recognizing him, he stopped his chariot and dismounted. "Is all well?" he asked as Gehazi reached him.

"All is well," answered Gehazi. "My master hath sent me, saying, 'Behold, even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets; give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver and two changes of garment.' "

Naaman, glad to show his gratitude, urged more on Gehazi. "Be content," he urged him, "take two talents."

He counted out the money into two bags, chose out two changes of raiment, and sent back two of his servants to carry them to Elisha.

When they were near the house Gehazi took the clothes and silver and dismissed the men. Then he stole into the house, hid his booty, and appeared before his master as if he were waiting for ordinary service.

"Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" asked Elisha.

"Thy servant went no whither," answered Gehazi.

"Went not mine heart with thee," said Elisha solemnly, "when Naaman turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive garments and olive yards and vineyards and sheep and oxen and men-servants and maid-servants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cling unto thee."

And the man of the unchildlike heart went out from Elisha's presence stricken with Naaman's disease.

III. THE HOSTS THAT GUARDED ELISHA

AFTER Naaman's healing there was for a time peace between Syria and Israel. Elisha had a new servant in Gehazi's place. With the new servant Elisha traveled as he had before up and down the length of Israel, and in one of his journeys came to the school of the prophets at Jericho. The young men there found that their house had grown too small for their numbers.

"Let us go, we pray thee," they said, "unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam and let us make a place there where we may dwell."

"Go ye," answered Elisha.

"Go with thy servants, I pray thee," one of them begged.

"I will go," said Elisha.

Taking their own tools and borrowing some beside, the whole body of students went down to a woody spot on the river's edge and began to cut trees for timbers. One of the young men who was swinging his axe with great strength, struck so hard that his axe head flew off and sank in the muddy water. Elisha was standing by and saw it.

"Alas, master," cried the youth, "it was borrowed."

"Where fell it?" asked Elisha kindly.

"Here," answered the young man, showing the place.

Elisha cut a twig and dropped it in at the same spot. Immediately from the depths the axe head floated up to meet it.

"Take it up to thee," said Elisha; and, astonished, the young man reached down and recovered his axe head.

But it was not long before Benhadad's gratitude for Naaman's healing died away and he renewed his marauding expeditions into Israel. They met with no success, for Elisha, with his seer's vision, knew always where Benhadad was coming and warned Joram that he might defend that particular spot. Over and over again this happened, until Benhadad began to suspect that Joram had a spy in the Syrian camp.

"Will ye not show me," Benhadad said to his men, "which of us is for the king of Israel?"

"None, my lord, O king," they protested, "but Elisha the prophet that is in Israel telleth the king of Israel ever the words that thou speakest in thy bed chamber."

"Go and spy where he is that I may fetch him," commanded Benhadad.

Presently the spies came back. "He is at Dothan," they reported.

Dothan, the spot where Joseph's brothers had sold him to the Midianite merchants, was a city set on a hill north of Samaria on the caravan route between Egypt and Syria. Benhadad feared Elisha so greatly that he sent a large host with horses and chariots to take the prophet, and this army encircled Dothan.

When Elisha awoke in the morning and started out into the streets with his servant, they saw on all sides the big Syrian army. The young man stopped short.

"Alas, my master," he said to Elisha, "how shall we do?"

He could see only material things, but Elisha had his eyes open to the spiritual.

"Fear not," he comforted, "they that be with us are more than they that be with them." And then he prayed, "Lord, open his eyes that he may see."

Then the spiritual vision came too upon the young man, and as he looked about on the hilltops he saw what before he had not perceived, that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha.

Boldly then the servant accompanied Elisha down to the Syrian host, and as they approached, blindness fell on the men who had come to seize the prophet, and instead of making him prisoner, they followed him to Samaria and into the presence of King Joram. Then once more their eyes were opened and they saw where they were.

"My father, shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?" cried Joram in his excitement.

"Thou shalt not smite them," answered Elisha. "Set bread and water before them that they may eat and drink and go to their master."

So the king provided them with food and drink and sent them home, and Benhadad once more stopped his attacks on Israel.

IV. BENHADAD BESIEGES SAMARIA

WHILE Benhadad lived, however, there could not long be peace between Damascus and Samaria, for the Syrian king was determined that sometime he would punish Israel for the humiliating peace that Ahab had forced on him, and for this purpose he found time—in an interval when he was not fighting Assyria—to march an army against Samaria. As he could not take the city by assault, he besieged it and shut it in so completely that it was impossible to bring food into Samaria. It was not long therefore before all the city's stores were exhausted and the people were facing starvation. The coarsest grain and worst kind of meat brought huge prices and after a while even that could not be had at any price. So much misery and degradation were about him on every side that Joram clothed himself in sackcloth as a sign of his humility and unhappiness. Then finally when a starving woman one day called on him for food which he could not give, Joram in despair rent his clothes.

"The head of Elisha shall not stand on him this day," cried Joram, throwing the blame for the city's affliction upon the one righteous man in it.

Elisha, in his own house, consulting with the elders of the city, knew of Joram's threat as soon as it was made.

"See ye," he said, "how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head. Look—when the messenger cometh, shut the door and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?"

Even as he spoke, the guard came to arrest Elisha, but the elders seized and held him as Elisha had commanded. And close behind the guard came Joram himself, leaning on the arm of a great noble.

Before Joram could speak Elisha spoke. "Hear ye the word of the Lord," he said. "To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of Samaria."

The noble with the king gave a sneering laugh. "If the Lord would make windows in heaven this thing might be."

Elisha knew that the God who had fed the Israelites with manna for forty years had His own way for providing for His people.

"Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof," he said to the unbelieving courtier.

The king and his escort and his guard turned away. Joram would not harm Elisha now till he saw whether or not his prophecy would come true.

Down outside the city gate in the meantime sat four lepers starving like the

rest. Lepers were not allowed inside a Jewish town, so these four had to crouch outside without help from Samaria within the gates or the Syrian camp beyond. By this time they were desperate.

"Why sit we here till we die?" one of them asked as they sat in the twilight. "If we say 'We will enter into the city,' then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die."

Night had fallen as they got up from their places to throw themselves on Syrian mercy. Stolidly they approached the camp, expecting every moment a command to halt, but no sentry molested them. They came to the border of the camp, paused, heard no sound, and went on further. Finally they came to the outer border of the camp and there was not a man in it.

Almost unable to believe their eyes, the four lepers entered a tent. There was plenty of food and they ate and drank till they were satisfied. When they left the tent they carried off all the treasure they could see and buried it in a secret place. Then they went into another tent and carried off the booty, and into another, wondering all the time what had happened.

It had been while the lepers sat miserably in the gate of Samaria in the twilight that the Syrians had heard a mighty noise. It might have been a storm or a great wind, but to their ears it sounded like the rumbling of chariot wheels and the galloping of horses and the tread of marching feet. As they had listened, panic seized them.

"Lo," they said to one another, "the king of Israel hath hired against us the king of the Egyptians to come upon us."

So great was their terror that they stampeded like frightened cattle, leaving everything behind them, but not one man to keep the camp. And then the four lepers had come.

After the lepers had made themselves rich for life with what they had taken, their consciences began to trouble them. "We do not well," they said. "This day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace; if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us. Now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household."

Together therefore they hurried back to Samaria's gate and hailed the porter. "We came to the camp of the Syrians," they called, "and behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were."

The porter told his companions the lepers' news, and hastily it was carried to Joram, who was asleep. He arose at once and called a council of war.

"I will show you now," he said, "what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.' "

"I pray thee," advised one of his generals, "let us take of the horses that are left in the city and let us send and see."

So on two chariot horses that still had some strength left in their legs two of the king's officers went out as scouts to see where Benhadad's army was hidden. But they found no ambush; they found only the sign of a panic-stricken retreat. As far as they went north the road was strewn with garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their eagerness to escape.

When the men came back with their report, the city gates were thrown open and the abundance of the Syrian supplies was brought into the city. The noble who had sneered at Elisha was appointed by Joram to oversee the dispensing of food at the city gates. As the starving multitudes rushed to the gates to satisfy their hunger, they pressed and crowded in such impatience that the man in charge was thrown down and trodden upon by the frantic people in their effort to get ahead of each other. So although he saw two measures of barley sold for a shekel and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, he did not himself eat any of it.

V. HAZAEL, KING OF SYRIA

WHEN Elijah in Ahab's time had stood in the cave's mouth at Horeb to listen to the still, small voice, three errands had been given to him. One of them—the calling of Elisha to succeed him—he had accomplished; the other two he had left for Elisha to do.

One was the anointing of Hazael in Syria in Benhadad's place, and the other, the anointing of Jehu in Israel to replace the wicked line of Ahab. The first of these errands Elisha now started out to do.

Traveling north through the entire length of Israel's kingdom, Elisha crossed the border into Syria and came to Damascus. He found that Benhadad was very sick.

As soon as Benhadad heard that Elisha had come into his kingdom, he called for Hazael, one of his officers. "Take a present in thine hand," he said, "and go meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by him, saying 'Shall I recover of this disease?' "

This request helps us to understand a little of Elisha's influence in Israel, which was almost as much of a heathen nation as Syria itself. Elisha was almost the only man who stood for the one God, and he alone had so proved God's power that even Benhadad acknowledged God's supremacy.

Hazael, anxious for power and disloyal to his king, nevertheless obeyed his commands. He loaded forty camels with the riches of Damascus and came to where Elisha lodged.

"Thy son Benhadad sent me to thee," Hazael said, "saying, 'Shall I recover of this disease?' "

Elisha whose eyes saw the future, fixed his gaze on Hazael as he gave his answer. "He certainly *may* recover," Elisha said, "nevertheless the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die."

Hazael set his face to hide the joy that he felt, and Elisha, still watching him, began to weep.

"Why weepest thou, my lord?" asked Hazael.

"Because," Elisha cried, "I know the evil that thou wilt do the children of Israel. Their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and thou wilt kill their women and children."

"But what!" stammered Hazael. "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this?"

"The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria," Elisha answered shortly and turned away without regard to Hazael's presents.

Covering his real feelings, Hazael went back to Benhadad, who greeted him eagerly. "What said Elisha to thee?" he asked.

"He said that thou shouldst surely recover," answered Hazael falsely.

But the very next day when he was alone with Benhadad, he smothered the king. And when the people thought that Benhadad had died of his illness, they made Hazael king in his place.

In the meantime Jehoram of Judah, who had begun to reign in the fifth year of Joram's rule in Israel, reigned eight years and, guided by his wife Athaliah Jehoram brought the kingdom of Judah into worse straits each year. Edom, who had been Judah's vassal since David's time, refused to serve so weak a king and threw off the yoke. Jehoram tried to quell the rebellion and marched his army down into the Edomite country. But the Lord did not go with him, and instead of crushing Edom, Edom encompassed him, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Jehoram and his chariots could cut their way out. Then he went back to Jerusalem and left Edom free.

After that the Arabians came against Jerusalem, and the Philistines. The

Philistines came into the city itself, as Shishak, king of Egypt, had done in Rehoboam's reign, and carried away Jehoram's treasures and his people. Even his sons were carried away; none was left but the youngest, Ahaziah.

And then Jehoram fell desperately ill and did not turn to the Lord in his sickness. For two years he suffered before he died. For his father Jehoshaphat's funeral there had been great incense-burning, but for Jehoram there was none, and though he was buried in Jerusalem, he was not laid in the royal sepulchre.

Chapter VI—AHAZIAH, KING OF JUDAH, AND HIS MOTHER, ATHALIAH

KINGS OF JUDAH—AHAZIAH, ATHALIAH
KINGS OF ISRAEL—JORAM, JEHU

I. THE REVOLUTION IN ISRAEL

AHAZIAH, Jehoram's youngest son, the only one spared by the Philistines, was twenty-two years old at his father's death. He was so entirely under the domination of his mother, Athaliah, that though he ascended the throne of Judah as its king, the real power lay in Athaliah's hands. The temple to Baal was left in Jerusalem and the heathen practices became firmly established at court, until it was fashionable to worship Baal. So deeply did Athaliah impress herself on Judah that her influence was never wholly overcome. She was responsible for the first great weakening of religious and national life in Judah that led to the final destruction of the kingdom.

Though we have heard little about the high-priests since the time of David, there had always been a high priest of Aaron's family in the temple. Jehoiada was priest now, and he had married Jehosheba, Ahaziah's sister. Jehosheba was not at all like her father or mother or brother, for she was true to Jehoiada, and he was a man of courage and wisdom and righteousness, longing, as he worshiped the one God in the temple, that all Judah should return to their obedience to the Lord of Israel.

Ahaziah kept to the alliance between Judah and Israel, and offered to his uncle Joram his services against the new king of Syria, for Joram thought this would be a good time to wrest from Syria the town of Ramoth-gilead across Jor-

dan which Benhadad had promised to restore to Ahab and which Ahab had given his life in a vain attempt to get.

The allied troops took Ramoth-gilead, but as Joram was severely wounded, he left Ramoth-gilead in charge of his chief captain, Jehu, who had in his youth been a favorite of Ahab, and Joram himself came down to his palace in the city of Jezreel to be nursed back to health by his mother. Ahaziah went with him.

Jehu had been with Ahab when the king had taken Naboth's vineyard in Jezreel and he had heard Elijah's prophecy as to the destruction of Ahab and all his family. Jehu had never forgotten it; a bold soldier, eager like Hazael for more power, he wondered in his own mind whether he might not be the man who should succeed Ahab's two sons on the throne of Israel. From one post of honor to another he had risen, until now at forty he was commander-in-chief of the army, as high as he could go without being king, and his ambition did not stop short of the throne.

To Elisha at one of the prophets' schools came now the call to carry out the command given to Elijah to anoint Jehu king over Israel, and thus take away from the country the curse of Ahab's family with its idol worship and wickedness. Elisha did not go himself to Jehu but sent one of the students of the school.

"Gird up thy loins," he said, "and take this box of oil in thine hand and go to Ramoth-gilead. And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu, and go in and make him arise from among his brethren and carry him to an inner chamber; then take the box of oil and pour it on his head and say, 'Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.' Then open the door and flee and tarry not."

So the young prophet, pondering over the part he was to play in this revolution in Israel, took the oil and crossed the Jordan to Ramoth-gilead. When he reached the city and the general's quarters, he found Jehu holding a council with his officers.

The messenger stepped boldly into the room. "I have an errand to thee, O captain," he said.

"Unto which of us?" asked Jehu.

"To thee, O captain," answered the young man.

Jehu went with him into a private room, where the prophet took from beneath his robe the vial of sacred oil. Jehu caught his breath at the sight.

The prophet spoke solemnly as he poured the oil over Jehu's head. "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'I have anointed thee king over the people of Israel. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, for the whole house of Ahab

shall perish. And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in Jezreel and there shall be none to bury her.' "

He finished and opened the door and fled. Jehu, left alone, stood a moment to realize what had happened, and then went back to his officers.

As Jehu reëntered the room, his officers looked at him curiously. "Is all well?" they asked. "Wherefore came this mad fellow unto thee?"

"Ye know the man and his communication," Jehu answered.

"We know not," they exclaimed. "Tell us now."

Jehu, with his eyes on the men to see how they would take the news, answered. "Thus spake he unto me, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.' "

There was no doubt as to the feelings of the captains of Jehu. With a shout they proclaimed him king, and carrying him up to a high tower where all the army could see, they threw down their robes under Jehu's feet and cried aloud, "Jehu is king!"

The whole army came over to Jehu as a man, and at its head Jehu, his old friend Bidkar in his chariot, started for Jezreel before any word of the uprising could get out of Ramoth-gilead. Once he had started, there was no chance of news getting ahead of him, for Jehu was a furious driver.

It was more than forty miles from Ramoth-gilead to Jezreel on the other side Jordan, but Jehu did not stop. Past the brook Jabbok, past Jabesh-gilead, to the ford of Jordan at Bethshean ran the road, straight up to the plain of Esdraelon and Jezreel. As they approached the city the watchman on the tower saw the cloud of dust they raised.

"I see a company," he reported to King Joram, who sat in conversation with his nephew King Ahaziah.

At once Joram concluded that Jehu had forced Hazael, king of Syria, to make a lasting peace and had come to tell of it.

"Take a horseman," he commanded eagerly, "and send to meet them, and let him say, 'Is it peace?' "

The horseman met Jehu and called as he came on, "Is it peace?"

"What hast thou to do with peace," cried Jehu flashing past. "Turn thou behind me."

The horseman, surprised, obeyed and the watcher on the tower reported to the king, "The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again."

"Send again," commanded Joram, but to the second horseman it happened as to the first.

"He cometh not again," reported the watchman. "And the driving is like the driving of Jehu, for he driveth furiously."

Sure now that the news was important, Joram ordered his own chariot made ready and Ahaziah's as well. Then both kings rode out to meet the general who was driving furiously. They met close by Naboth's vineyard.

"Is it peace, Jehu?" cried Joram.

There was no loyalty or respect in Jehu's answer. "What peace so long as the witchcrafts of Jezebel are so many," he said.

Then Joram understood what it all meant and turned his chariot back toward the city, crying, "There is treachery, O Ahaziah."

He could not escape it. Jehu had fitted an arrow in his bow, and when Joram turned, Jehu drew the string. The arrow struck the king in the back and he fell dead out of his chariot.

For a moment Jehu stopped. "Take him up," he said to Bidkar, "and cast him in the field of Naboth, for remember how that when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father the Lord laid this burden upon him. 'Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,' saith the Lord, 'and I will requite thee in this plat.' Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the Lord."

When Ahaziah saw Joram fall he gave his horses full rein and fled toward his own country. But Jehu followed him too and caught him as he neared the southern border of the plain of Esdraelon, and shot him in his chariot. Ahaziah lived to reach Megiddo. There he died after a reign of one year.

His body was taken to Jerusalem to be buried in the tomb of the kings, and Athalia, his mother, seized the government.

II. THE REVOLUTION IN JUDAH

WHEN Jehu had killed the two kings, he turned his chariot back to the city of Jezreel, for he had Jezebel still to deal with. She, from the palace window on the wall, had seen her son Joram killed before her eyes and knew that Jehu was master of Israel. But wicked as she was, she was not physically a coward, and she put on her best attire to greet Jehu when he came back. He stopped under her window.

Jezebel, cheeks painted and hair dressed, looked down. "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" she taunted Jehu.

Jehu did not answer her. He looked up at the servants who stood beside her and spoke to them. "Who is on my side? Who?" he called.

'JEHOIADA LED JOASH OUT OF HIDING AND PLACED HIM ON A HIGH PLATFORM ON THE PORTICO OF THE TEMPLE WHERE ALL MIGHT SEE HIM"

"I am for thee," answered one servant, and then another and another.

"Throw her down," commanded Jehu shortly.

They obeyed. Jezebel was killed by the fall, but Jehu drove his chariot over her, and went into the palace for rest and food. Jehu knew what a curse Jezebel had been to Israel but, as he ate, his conscience troubled him for his last inhuman act to her. Finally he turned to his servants.

"Go," he said, "find now this cursed woman and bury her, for after all she is a king's daughter."

The servants obeyed, but they could not find Jezebel, for the fierce wild dogs that prowled the streets had already devoured her. The servants came back to Jehu and told him.

"This is the word of Elijah the Tishbite," Jehu exclaimed. "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the walls of Jezreel.' "

While Jehu thus reigned in Israel, Athaliah in Judah, on the death of her son Ahaziah, had proclaimed herself sovereign, and her first act was to kill all of the royal princes that still lived, in order that none of them might dispute her right to the throne. But in this murder Ahaziah's youngest son escaped. Jehosheba, Ahaziah's sister, took her little nephew Joash, two months old, and carried him to her husband, Jehoiada, for safe keeping. Thus the heir was saved to the kingdom, though Athaliah did not know it.

As no one was allowed to go to the high priest's apartments it was easy to hide the little prince Joash. For six years he lived with his nurse in the temple precincts, while Athaliah ruled in Judah, making it a heathen nation and almost a tributary to her mother's country, Phœnicia. It became the fashion for the court to worship Baal, and the worship of the true God was left to the humbler people and to the priests and Levites.

Jehoiada knew that Jehu had wiped Baal worship out of Israel and longed to destroy it in Judah. But Athaliah's hold on Judah was too strong at first to be attacked, and Jehoiada bided his time. Secretly, as he thought wise, he brought those with whom he came in contact into his desire for freedom and righteousness in Judah.

By the time Joash was almost seven years old Jehoiada judged that the time was ripe for revolution in Judah. The country was tired of Athaliah's relentless rule. Even the five captains of her armies were ready to listen to Jehoiada's cautious advances, and when the high priest finally acknowledged that a prince of David's direct line was still alive, they were eager to swear to him their allegiance. Then Jehoiada allowed them to see the young prince.

Sure of his existence, the five captains sent secretly through Judah calling to

Jerusalem all the priests and Levites and all the great men who would stand for the overthrow of Athaliah and Baal worship. They assembled on a Sabbath when their presence in Jerusalem would be most natural.

Jehoiada chose his guard from the Levites. He armed them with swords and shields which had been laid up from David's time, and setting them at the temple gates, he commanded them to let no one but the priests and the Levites enter or leave the temple, though the people were allowed to fill the temple courts as they came for worship.

When the courts were full of people, Jehoiada led Joash out of hiding and placed him on a high platform on the portico of the temple where all might see him. News runs quickly through a crowd, and as Jehoiada put the crown on the young prince and gave to him a copy of Moses' law, the bystanders knew that it was Ahaziah's son who stood before them. When Jehoiada finally poured the sacred oil on Joash's head, the mass of people broke out in loud acclamation.

"God save the king!" they cried and clapped their hands in joy and approval, while the trumpets sounded and the temple music rang out.

Athaliah in the royal palace had had no suspicion of the plot against her until she heard the tumult in the city. Then, like Jezebel, brave as she was wicked, she called for her chariot and drove to the temple.

People made way for her to enter the temple court, and as soon as she saw, she understood that in some way one of her grandsons had escaped her murderous hand and had been made king of Judah. Where she stood, she raised her voice in appeal to her followers.

"Treason! Treason!" she cried, but no one responded.

"Have her forth," Jehoiada commanded, "and him that followeth her kill with the sword. Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord."

By the horse-gate of her own palace Athaliah was killed, while the coronation hymn was still sounding in the temple.

When the hymn was over Jehoiada made a solemn covenant with the Lord promising, as had Moses and Joshua and David in times past, to serve only the God of Israel. And all the people said "Amen."

Chapter VII—JOASH, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—JOASH
KINGS OF ISRAEL—JEHU, JEHOAHAZ, JEHOASH

THE first act of Joash's reign was the destruction by Jehoiada of Baal's temple and images in Jerusalem. Then with a great body-guard the high priest led the new king out from the temple to the royal palace. There was no opposition. All the city rejoiced in the end of Athaliah's reckless, wicked, tyrannous rule and in the accession of a king who had sworn to bring the nation again to the worship of Israel's God.

Jehoiada, the king's guardian and counselor during his boyhood, set to work at once to restore the temple worship. He reorganized the twenty-four courses of priests which David had instituted, purified the temple service, and as Joash grew older repaired those breaches in the temple structure which Athaliah had made to get material for her temple for Baal. So long as Jehoiada lived Judah prospered, but when he died, the heathen party at court persuaded the grandson of Athaliah to follow her religion, and it was not long before Jehoiada's good work was undone. Joash so far forgot his gratitude to Jehoiada that in his anger at a rebuke from the new high priest, Jehoiada's son Zechariah, he killed Zechariah in the very temple. No king had killed a high priest since Saul had slaim Ahimelech. And no one had ever been bold enough to murder in the temple a priest of God.

In Israel Jehu did no better than Joash in Judah. He had indeed stamped Baal worship out of his kingdom, but he kept up the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, and little by little his power decreased, until at his death, after a reign of twenty-eight years, Hazael of Syria had so far overrun Israel that the kingdom Jehu left to his son Jehoahaz was very much smaller than the kingdom that Jehu himself had seized.

Jehoahaz lost even more of his possessions, for so completely did Hazael subjugate Israel that he allowed Jehoahaz to maintain an army of only ten thousand foot, fifty horse, and ten chariots. Jehoahaz died while the country was in this condition, and his son Jehoash succeeded him.

Hazael, not content with conquering Israel, carried his warfare down into Judah and to the gates of Jerusalem. Joash's army far outnumbered Hazael's,

but in his cowardice Joash bought peace from Syria as Rehoboam had from Egypt, by surrendering the treasure of the temple.

It is thought that the prophet Joel lived in Joash's time, and as we read the glowing, fervid words set down in the book of Joel, we wonder that Joash could listen to them and not repent.

But Joash kept on in his evil ways until his own servants turned against him and murdered him to avenge the death of Zechariah.

Chapter VIII—AMAZIAH, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—AMAZIAH
KINGS OF ISRAEL—JEHOASH, JEROBOAM II.

WHEN a king was murdered in Israel his murderer usually usurped the throne, but in Judah the royal line was never broken. Joash's son Amaziah succeeded his father as a matter of course, and his first act was to punish his father's murderers.

Edom rebelled again in Amaziah's reign, but Amaziah crushed the rebellion, although sadly enough he carried back from his expedition into Edom some of the idols of that country and set them up in Jerusalem. He knew that the God of Israel had given him the victory, and yet the king worshiped the ineffectual gods of the nation he had just conquered. In the book of the prophet Obadiah we may read his vision of Edom.

Stirred to pride by his victory over Edom, Amaziah turned his arms against Jehoash of Israel. He soon proved that Edom's gods had no power to save, for Jehoash defeated Judah in a pitched battle, took Amaziah prisoner and marched on Jerusalem, where Amaziah bought his freedom by more of the temple treasure.

In the reign of Jehoash Elisha died. When word came to Jehoash that the old prophet was near his end, he went at once to see Elisha.

"O my father, my father," the king cried to the prophet, using the same words that Elisha had used to Elijah when Elijah left him, "The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" For the moment the king saw that only in God and in those to whom God spoke lay the safety and strength of Israel.

Elisha, still seeing the vision of God and still loving his country, spoke to Jehoash. "Take bow and arrows," he said.

Jehoash took his bow and stood for further commands.

"Open the window eastward," commanded Elisha. "Put thine hand upon the bow."

Again the king obeyed. With his bowstring drawn tight and his arrow fitted, he stood facing the window that opened toward the country east of Jordan that Hazael had taken from Jehoahaz.

"Shoot," said Elisha, and as the arrow sped away eastward, he added, "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance; the arrow of deliverance from Syria. For thou shalt smite the Syrians until thou hast consumed them."

With that ringing prophecy in his ears the king once more faced the old prophet.

"Take the arrows," Elisha said. "Smite upon the ground."

King of a country where object lessons were so much used, Jehoash must have known that Elisha's command to smite the ground was a picture of his smiting the Syrians. But with the arrows in his hand he stooped and struck the floor three times and stopped.

Elisha, troubled, turned away. If Israel had a king with so little vigor, what salvation could the country hope for? "Now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice," he said, and that was all.

Jehoash went out from Elisha's chamber to his own palace to face what lay before him. Hazael was dead now and his son Benhadad III, who reigned over Syria, was crippled by his wars with Assyria. Jehoash's army, on the other hand, was strengthened and well equipped, and the king of Israel had a good chance to overthrow his enemy. Three times Jehoash met Benhadad in battle and in each encounter regained some of the cities that Hazael had taken from Jehoahaz. But then he stopped; he had not the force to break the yoke of Syria.

Elisha died and was buried with great honors. From the time of Ahab through the reigns of Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Jehoash he had been a prophet. Though he did not take an active part in the nation's politics, as did the prophets later in Judah, he was nevertheless a power, as with his seer's vision he went up and down through the country, talking with kings, teaching the young students in the schools of the prophets and, through the power of the God whom he served, bringing life and health and joy to all whom he met.

Jehoash died soon after his defeat by Syria, and was succeeded by his son Jeroboam II. Like his great-grandfather Jehu, Jeroboam II was a great warrior.

Amaziah in Judah lived fifteen years after the accession of Jeroboam II to the throne of Israel, but his people never forgave him for opening the gates of Jerusalem to Jehoash, and Amaziah was murdered at last by his nobles. Uzziah, a boy of sixteen, became king in his father's place.

Chapter IX—UZZIAH, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—UZZIAH
KINGS OF ISRAEL—JEROBOAM II, ZACHARIAH, SHALLUM, MENAHEM, PEKAHIAH

II. THE PROPHET AMOS

WHEN Uzziah came to the throne Jeroboam II had already reigned fifteen years in Israel and had restored much of its ancient glory. He had pursued the king of Syria, weakened by the attacks of Assyria, up into his own country and even to Syria's capital city of Damascus, and had retaken for Israel some of the coast cities.

But though Jeroboam was thus able to extend his kingdom, to fill Samaria with wealth and luxury, and to hold in check Syria and Phœnicia, Moab and Ammon, and even Judah, he did not listen to the call of the prophet Jonah to return to the God of Israel and live righteously by His laws. Besides the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, heathen idols appeared once more on the high places. Everywhere was falsehood and cruelty and oppression.

In Elisha's place, to this demoralized Israel there appeared the prophet Amos. Amos had not been educated in the schools of the prophets; he was a shepherd lad, as David had been, poetic, and fervent and religious and thinking deeply as he sat out in the open under the stars or under the blue sky with his flocks. And as he pondered on the wickedness of the country he lived in, and on the wonderful leadings of Israel's God out of Egypt through the desert up to the possession of this land that Israel was now profaning, suddenly the Lord spoke to him, as He had to Moses in Horeb, calling Amos to an especial task.

"Go," He said, "prophesy unto my people Israel," and Amos, leaving his flocks went to Bethel, the chief place of worship in Israel, where the king himself had a chapel.

The place was filled with worshipers before whom the priest, Amaziah, was offering sacrifice, but Amos knew no fear. Standing in the midst of the throng, he lifted up his voice in prophecy of the downfall of Syria, of Philistia, of Phœnicia, of Edom, of Ammon, of Moab, of Judah, and finally of the downfall and captivity of Israel. The throng, held by the prophet's eloquence, listened, and even Amaziah the priest did not dare to interrupt him.

Jeroboam II died before the prophecies of Amos were fulfilled. Zachariah, who succeeded his father Jeroboam, was the fourth and last king of the family of

Jehu to rule Israel. He had reigned only six months when Shallum killed him and took the throne. Shallum was king one month and then Menahem killed him and made himself king. For ten years Menahem ruled Israel in cruelty and oppression.

In this time of anarchy and tumult lived the prophet Hosea, who tried, like Amos, to call back Israel to the remembrance of the God of Israel before it was too late. But Israel listened no more to Hosea than it had to Amos.

I. THE PROPHET JONAH

WHILE Amos was thus sent to call Israel to repentance, the prophet Jonah, of whom we have heard in Samaria, was singled out to carry the same message to Assyria. Assyria, with its capital at Nineveh on the Tigris river, had in the last years been steadily growing in power. It had forced Syria and Phœnicia, Philistia and Israel to pay tribute; and had made itself felt in Babylon,—the Chaldean empire, which lay south of Assyria,—and in Media east of Assyria. But just now in the interval of some years after the death of Shalmaneser before Tiglath-Pileser came to the throne, Assyria was in a state of anarchy and tumult. Yet it was Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, that Jonah was told to visit.

Jonah lived in a small town in Galilee not far from Nazareth. He was thus, like Amos, a man of the country instead of the city, and like Amos, too, he was full of love and patriotism for his nation. He would have given his life for Israel, but he could not see why he should be sent to convert a heathen nation which was an enemy to Israel.

Thinking that he knew better than God, who had called him to the mission, Jonah tried to escape it. With great haste he left his village for the seaport of Joppa to embark on any vessel that would carry him away from Nineveh. At Joppa he found a vessel bound to the Phœnician colony of Tarshish, and Jonah took passage in it to escape from the presence of the Lord.

Jonah's conscience was not at rest as the vessel moved out of port and went on its way; he was so troubled at what he had done, indeed, that he told the sailors about it.

Before they had gone very far there arose one night a great storm. Jonah, asleep below, knew nothing about it, although the sailors were crying out in terror to their gods as they threw overboard the cargo to lighten the vessel. Sure that they were going down, the captain wakened his passenger.

"What meanest thou, O sleeper?" he cried. "Arise, call upon thy God if so

be that God will think upon us that we perish not." But he did not know that Jonah's God was the God of Israel.

Frightened, Jonah went up with the captain to where the sailors stood, for he wondered whether all these men must perish as punishment for his disobedience. When he reached the mariners, they spoke.

"Come," they said, "let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us."

The lots were cast, and Jonah was singled out from the throng as the man who had sinned. At once the sailors remembered that he had fled from his God, and they all fastened on him with questions.

"What is thine occupation?" questioned one.

"Whence comest thou?" demanded another.

"What is thy country?" a third wanted to know.

"Of what people art thou?" a fourth asked.

"I am a Hebrew," Jonah answered them, "and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which made the sea and the dry land."

The sailors fell back from him. They had heard of the prophets of Israel and of the mighty deeds of Israel's God, and were sure now that this disobedient prophet had brought all this evil upon them.

"Why hast thou done this thing?" they exclaimed. "What shall we do unto thee that the sea may be calm unto us?"

"Take me up," answered Jonah, "and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

The sailors believed him, but they were humane and wished to save Jonah if they could. Once more they bent to their oars in their attempt to reach land, but both wind and water were against them and they made no progress. When they found their efforts were useless, they gave over their toil and gathered again around Jonah.

"We beseech thee, O Lord," they cried aloud in prayer to Jonah's God, "we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life and lay not upon us innocent blood."

They laid hold of Jonah and dropped him overboard, and then pulling at their oars, the mariners steered their ship into smooth waters and went on their way. Jonah sank down, down through the tempestuous sea, and as he thought himself drowning, repented of his cowardice. Then he was given another chance to prove himself, for a great fish of those waters swallowed him, and for three days Jonah was alive within the fish.

"Thou hast cast me out into the deep, into the midst of the sea," Jonah

prayed in repentance to the Lord. "The floods compassed me about; all Thy billows and Thy waters passed over me. The waters compassed me about, the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted in me, I remembered the Lord. I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that which I vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

Then the fish reached land and threw Jonah out on the shore, and he had still a chance to do the work which the Lord had given him.

As Jonah lay on the sand after his wonderful deliverance the word of God came again. "Arise," it said. "Go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."

Jonah did not dare disobey the second time, but he went reluctantly on his way—the first missionary from the Jews to the Gentiles.

God had chosen the Jews as His peculiar people, and out of this most spiritual nation of the time He had taken Noah and Abraham and Moses and David and Elijah to keep alive for the whole world through the ages of heathenism the torch of the truth of the one God who is Spirit. Jonah with the other prophets kept his ears keen for the word of the Lord, but he had not the greatness of vision or the wisdom to realize that the Jews were only bearers of the torch that should enlighten the whole world; he wanted to keep all the light and warmth for the Jews alone. Nineveh was the capital of heathen Assyria; it did not matter much to Hebrew Jonah whether its people were saved or not. Jonah knew the law, but the gospel had not yet been preached.

Nineveh was a fenced city of such great size that it had about sixty miles of walls. Its recent conquests had filled it with riches, and the wealth had brought luxury and idleness and wickedness. The government was both corrupt and weak. There were revolts all over the empire and Nineveh itself just now was unsettled and tumultuous.

As Jonah, dressed perhaps in a long sheepskin mantle, entered this great city, he cried aloud, over and over, always the same words. "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

The people of the east were always ready to listen to a prophet, and this stranger with his message of unhappiness at once attfacted attention. People followed him and listened and believed, for in the discordant condition of Assyria, its downfall would be a natural thing. Finally Jonah's message came to the king.

The king was frightened, knowing his own weakness and wickedness, and at

"JONAH WAS GIVEN ANOTHER CHANCE, FOR A GREAT FISH SWALLOWED HIM, AND FOR THREE DAYS HE WAS ALIVE WITHIN THE FISH"

once issued a proclamation. "Let neither man nor beast," it read, "herd nor flock taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily unto God. Yea, let them turn, every one, from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?"

The decree went out, and it was obeyed. From the king on his throne to the poorest man in the city, all Nineveh clothed itself in sackcloth and fasted as their outward sign of repentance. But it went deeper than that, for Nineveh not only repented, it started toward reformation, which is the only true part of repentance.

Jonah had done what God had commanded him; he had called Nineveh to repentance; but his success did not please him; he would rather Nineveh would have perished to a man and made one less enemy for Israel. Displeased that God was ready to save Nineveh, Jonah asked God to let him die.

"Doest thou well to be angry?" God asked him.

Jonah had no answer for that, but still angry he went to the east side of the city and built himself a little hut of boughs to shield himself from the sun, and sat down in it to see what would become of Nineveh.

Jonah had made himself such a poor hut that he found, as the sun rose, he had little protection from the heat. But a wild gourd that was growing by it came up so fast and thick that it covered with its leaves the holes in Jonah's roof and gave him perfect protection from the heat. Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd.

But then the caterpillars got at the leaves of the vine and devoured them. When the sun rose again and a hot east wind sprang up Jonah was once more unprotected, and as the sun beat down upon him and Jonah grew faint under it, he grew angry again.

"It is better for me to die than live," he cried.

"Doest thou well to be angry?" the Lord asked the second time.

"I do well to be angry even unto death," answered Jonah in his impatience.

"Thou art sorry about a gourd," answered the voice of the Lord, "a gourd for which thou hast not labored nor made to grow, which can come up in a night and perish in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left?"

We do not know what Jonah answered, nor whether he was ever able to comprehend the greatness of God's plan for the salvation of all His children,

east and west, north and south, but we may always remember Jonah as the first missionary from the Jews to the outside world.

III. THE KING WHO WAS A LEPER

WHEN the king who had repented at Jonah's warning died, he was in time succeeded by Tiglath-Pileser, who quieted the disturbances at home, brought Babylon under Assyrian rule, and laid Syria and Phœnicia under tribute. Then he came as far south as Israel and demanded tribute of that kingdom.

Menahem thought it wise to buy the friendship of Assyria by one thousand talents of silver which he exacted from his nobles. Menahem died not long after this and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, who after two years was murdered by Pekah, one of his captains, who made himself king of Israel.

While anarchy was thus abroad in Israel, in Judah, Uzziah, the son of Joash, was unifying and strengthening his kingdom. Uzziah was very fond of farming, so he had early turned his attention toward the improvement of the farms and pastures and vineyards throughout the country. He built strongholds in the desert for the protection of the farmers and herdmen and dug wells that they might always have water for their gardens and flocks.

When he had ordered his kingdom thus prosperously, Uzziah turned his attention to the walls of Jerusalem, repairing all breaches and building towers for defense. His next step was to reorganize and strengthen his army until he had a force of three hundred and seventy thousand men well equipped with helmets and spears and bows and slings. Not content with this, clever men in Jerusalem invented for the king catapults and great engines to throw stones like cannon balls. With this army newly officered and well drilled Uzziah was able not only to protect himself against almost any foe, but could even venture on aggression. Though he lived in peace with Israel, he forced Ammon to pay tribute, put down the Arabians, and even conquered Judah's constant enemy Philistia. He took Gath and Ashdod, leveled their walls and built cities of his own in the Philistine country. Not since the days of Solomon had Judah been so prosperous.

Thus things went well as long as Uzziah's tutor lived, but when he died Uzziah forgot his dependence on the Lord and began to think that it was his own wisdom and skill that had raised Judah again to greatness. And not content with being king, he wished also to be high priest.

One feast day when the sacrifices were being offered in the temple Uzziah put on the priestly dress and went to burn incense in the holy place where only

the priests were allowed to go. Azariah, the high priest, followed him and with him were eighty other priests, all alarmed at the king's act.

"It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord," Azariah said boldly to the king, "but to the priests of the sons of Aaron that are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed."

Uzziah, very angry at this rebuke, lifted his hand to swing the censer he carried. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that just at this moment there came the earthquake that Amos speaks of in his book, but whether that happened or not, the king was stricken with the same disease which Elisha had healed in Naaman. The priests, horrified, saw on Uzziah the mark of leprosy.

Uzziah too knew what had happened, and without a protest he dropped the censer and turned from the temple. From that moment he was an outcast. He lived some years after this, for he reigned in all fifty-two years, but he could not even dwell in his own palace. He must live alone in a separate house, while his son Jotham carried on the government of the kingdom. And when Uzziah finally died, he could not, for all his greatness, be buried in the royal sepulchre, for no such honor would be accorded to a leper.

Chapter X—JOTHAM, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—JOTHAM
KING OF ISRAEL—PEKAH

THE reign of Jotham, like that of Jehoshaphat long before him, was a quiet era of peace and prosperity instead of action. Although he did not destroy the altars and high places scattered through Judah, he maintained the temple worship and restored the temple building.

Jotham reigned sixteen years, and at his death, through his wisdom and piety, he left his kingdom richer than when he inherited it. He was buried with all honors, and his son Ahaz succeeded him.

Chapter XI—AHAZ, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—AHAZ
KINGS OF ISRAEL—PEKAH, HOSEA

ALTHOUGH Jotham had been among the best of the kings of Judah, he left behind him a son who was one of the worst kings who reigned over the nation. Ahaz was twenty years old when his father died, and in his reign of sixteen years the only good thing we hear of him is his marriage with Abijah, daughter of that Zechariah perhaps who had perished by the hand of Joash. Abijah must have been a good woman for she brought up her son Hezekiah to be a good man in spite of all the evil influences around him.

But Ahaz, son of a virtuous father and father of a virtuous son, was himself utterly corrupt. Inheriting seemingly Athaliah's character, he allied himself completely with the court party who worshiped Baal and turned his kingdom into a heathen country. In every street corner in Jerusalem was an altar to some foreign god, and in the valley of Hinnom south of the walls of Jerusalem, he set up an image of Moloch, god of the Ammonites, and instituted the dreadful practice of casting children into the flames upon its altar. Ahaz even offered one of his own sons in this way. The high priest of his time, Uriah, had not the courage of Zechariah, for he did not rebuke Ahaz but followed in the way the king commanded.

The luxury and extravagance of Jerusalem was as great as that of Samaria, which Hosea had denounced. Ahaz lived only for pleasure, with no thought of keeping up the good work which Uzziah and Jotham had begun. His army ran down, and at once the foes whom Ahaz's father and grandfather had reduced sprang up again. Rezin, king of Syria, invaded the kingdom and carried off many of the inhabitants to Damascus. Edom revolted and entered Judah from the east side, while the Philistines came from the west, all glad to throw off Judah's yoke and take back what they had lost. Even Pekah, king of Israel, despising the weakness of Ahaz, marched his army down into the southern kingdom, killed one hundred and twenty thousand men in battle, and carried back to Samaria much treasure and many captives.

In Uzziah's day there had been born of a noble family in Jerusalem a boy who was to prove one of the great prophets of his nation. All through Jotham's reign he lived in Jerusalem pondering his mission but taking no part in the events

of the day. It was Ahaz's accession and his wicked reign that stirred Isaiah's patriotism to its depths. He loved his country; he could see a great future for it if it trusted to God as its only helper and obeyed His laws of righteousness; but if the people whose ears were deaf and whose eyes were blind went on in their wickedness and turned for protection to a heathen nation, there was no help for the kingdom. And Isaiah knew that Ahaz was meditating an alliance with Assyria to save himself from the combined forces of Pekah in Samaria and Rezin in Damascus.

Sent by the word of the Lord, Isaiah went to Ahaz. "Fear not," he said, "because Syria and Israel have taken evil counsel against thee. It shall not come to pass. Ask thou a sign of the Lord."

"I will not ask," Ahaz answered.

"The Lord shall give you a sign," cried Isaiah, his prophet's vision looking far into the future to see the Messiah that should come to Israel. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Prince of Peace."

This marvelous prophecy meant nothing to Ahaz and Isaiah, seeing it, went on to stern denunciation. God was ready to save Judah, but if Ahaz turned from God's help to Assyria, Assyria itself should bring ruin upon the country.

Ahaz turned from the prophet's warning and went on his way to ask help from Tiglath-Pileser who, granting it readily, took Damascus and killed Rezin, forced Phœnicia to tribute, invaded Israel and carried many Jews into captivity. Pekah, who could not defend his country against Assyria, was killed by Hosea, who made himself king.

Ahaz, after the fall of Damascus, went up to that city to thank Tiglath-Pileser for his help. He saw a heathen altar there which he admired, so he sent a model of it to the high priest in Jerusalem, ordering that an altar like it should be built in Jerusalem. The high priest had it copied exactly, and Ahaz on his return to Jerusalem set it up in place of Solomon's altar of brass.

The temple was stripped once more to find tribute money for Tiglath-Pileser. When the gold and silver were not enough Ahaz moved the brass laver from the twelve brass oxen on which it was set and gave the oxen to the Assyrian king.

For a year after Pekah's death Ahaz reigned, and his kingdom was only a heathen province of Assyria. The temple gates were closed and altars to strange gods built in every city in Judah.

Then Ahaz died, and his son Hezekiah succeeded him.

Chapter XII—HEZEKIAH, KING OF JUDAH

KING OF JUDAH—HEZEKIAH
KING OF ISRAEL—HOSEA

I. HEZEKIAH RESTORES THE TEMPLE

HEZEKIAH, through all these evil days in Judah, was brought up in the laws of Moses and the spirit of David. He was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne, and his first thought was to restore to Jerusalem the worship which David had established.

In the first month of his reign Hezekiah opened the temple doors which Ahaz had closed, and then set heartily to work to cleanse the temple from its defilement. The priests went within and brought out all unclean remnants of idol worship, and the Levites bore them down to the brook Kidron, where they threw them in to be carried away by the stream. It took them eight days to purify the temple and eight more to cleanse the courts.

At the end of the sixteen days Hezekiah arose and with a train of his nobles went up to offer the first sacrifice to the Lord in the temple that had been purified for Him.

As the sacrifices were offered by the priests, the Levites with the cymbals and harps and psalteries which David had introduced into the service stood and made music. The trumpets blew and all the congregation of the children of Israel assembled in the temple courts worshiped again with fervent hearts the God of Israel, as their forefathers had worshiped in the wilderness tabernacle.

Roused by what he had done to greater deeds, Hezekiah proclaimed that the Passover should be celebrated once more in Jerusalem. He sent his runners through all the land from Dan to Beer-sheba to summon Israel as well as Judah to come up to Jerusalem to the great feast which had been so little celebrated of late years.

Most of the Israelites laughed the message to scorn, but many too were glad to obey it, and when the Passover was held, there were men of Israel as well as men of Judah in the assembly.

On the fourteenth day the passover was prepared, and for seven days the people feasted and rejoiced. The Levites made music and the priests sang psalms, till all Jerusalem was filled with joy. Every remnant of heathen altar

through the city was broken down and thrown into the Kidron by the Passover throngs.

When the seven days were over, another week of feasting and praise and merry-making began, for the people found it hard to separate and end the great celebration. Since the days of Solomon its like had not been seen in Jerusalem.

After the Passover festivities were over in Jerusalem, the religious ardor stirred there ran over the whole of Judah. For the first time since Judah had been a separate kingdom the high places were destroyed all over the country. Other kings had abolished idol worship, but Hezekiah was the first to pull down altars and level high places. He left nothing that could turn the people's minds from the one temple at Jerusalem. Even one of the chief treasures of the Jews, the brass serpent that Moses had made in the wilderness, was destroyed by Hezekiah, because instead of keeping it as a remembrance the people were worshiping it as a god.

Then Hezekiah once more restored the courses of the priests and arranged the hymns of praise that the Levites were to sing. He commanded also that the people should each bring his share for the support of the priests, and they brought it so generously and lovingly that not only were the priests and Levites fully supplied, but there were stores to lay up for future times.

II. THE FALL OF SAMARIA

ISAIAH, who had been rejected by Ahaz, became the life-long friend of King Hezekiah. Like David, Isaiah was a statesman and a poet as well as a prophet who caught glimpses of the perfect creation of God and looked forward to the coming of the Messiah.

There was at this time another prophet named Micah. He had lived through the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, but his prophecies came in Hezekiah's reign. He, too, saw the perfect creation and he saw the coming Messiah. It is Micah who foretells Jesus' birthplace.

"Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler of Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Micah was a man of the country of Elijah's type. In the desert he saw his vision, but when he came up to Jerusalem he found a life so different from the perfection of his vision that it struck grief to his heart. Stripped of his outer robe, Micah went through the streets wailing the doom of the city if it did not repent, for in spite of Hezekiah's endeavors to restore true religion to his king-

dom, there was still strong in the land the heathen influence which Athaliah had brought to Judah.

Shalmanezer reigned now in Assyria, and he still demanded from Hosea in Israel and Hezekiah in Judah the tribute which Tiglath-Pileser had exacted. To make up his portion Hezekiah tore off the gold covering of the temple doors. Hosea refused the tribute, and in punishment Shalmanezer, sweeping down through Israel, made Hosea captive and laid siege to Samaria.

The city held out three years, but without a leader, without an outside army, without national unity, without trust in God, Israel could not hope to be saved. When Samaria fell finally, the king of Assyria carried captive all the people of the region round about the city and repeopled the district with men from Babylon and other foreign places. The few Jews that were left intermarried with the strangers, and the mixed race of Samaritans was always afterwards hated by the true Jews. Assyria left a Jewish priest in Israel, but he became one with the people of the land, and the knowledge of God died out of Samaria.

And thus the kingdom of Israel, started when Jeroboam took the ten tribes away from Solomon's son, ended as a province of Assyria under Shalmaneser and his son Sargon and Sargon's son Sennacherib. The men of Israel, scattered in many lands, were no longer a nation. They had broken their covenant with God, and that covenant depended now for its fulfillment on only one tribe of the twelve, the tribe of Judah. We never hear again of the ten tribes. To this day people wonder what really became of them.

III. HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS

SOON after the paying of tribute from the temple, Hezekiah fell very ill, and as he lay in his bed Isaiah came to see him.

"Set thine house in order," Isaiah said solemnly, "for thou shalt die, and not live."

Hezekiah did not answer, but turning in his bed with his face to the wall he prayed to God that he might live longer, while Isaiah, having given his message, left the palace.

But as Isaiah reached the middle court of the palace, God's word came once more to the prophet. "Turn again to Hezekiah, the captain of my people."

Isaiah listened to the Lord's message and then went with it back to Hezekiah.

"Thus saith the Lord, the God of David," the prophet declared, "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold I will heal thee; on the third day thou

shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake."

"What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me," asked Hezekiah eagerly, "and that I shall go up unto the house of the Lord on the third day?"

"This sign shalt thou have that the Lord will do the thing that He hath spoken," Isaiah answered. "Shall the shadow on the sun-dial go forward ten degrees or go back ten degrees?"

"It is a light thing for the shadow to go forward ten degrees," Hezekiah said. "Let the shadow return backward ten degrees."

And so it happened, for when Hezekiah sent some one to observe the dial that Ahaz his father had set up, behold the shadow cast on it had gone backward ten degrees. And Hezekiah knew that the Lord had healed him.

The news of Hezekiah's sickness and wonderful healing spread far and wide and went as far as Babylon. Merodach-baladin, a great enemy of Assyria, was king of Babylon, and when he heard of Hezekiah's recovery he sent envoys to carry his congratulations to the king and rich gifts, for he thought that the king of Judah might some time be to him a good ally against Assyria.

The envoys reached Jerusalem and were received by the king. Flattered by their friendly words and by their admiration of the riches of his capital, Hezekiah showed them everything in it, that they might report to their master what a great king he was. He showed them the temple with its gold and silver, his armory, his spices and precious oils, and his treasury. There was nothing in the city or temple or palace that the king did not open to the gaze of these strangers who might some time be his enemies.

When the envoys, full of all they had seen, had gone on their way back to Babylon, Isaiah came to Hezekiah with a very grave face. Not only did Isaiah's statesmanship tell him that Hezekiah had committed a very grave fault, but as a prophet Isaiah could foresee the results to Judah of the king's act.

"What said these men?" he asked. "And from whence came they unto thee?"

"They are come from a far country, even from Babylon," answered the king.

"What have they seen in thine house?" demanded Isaiah.

"All the things that are in mine house have they seen," Hezekiah said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them."

"Hear the word of the Lord," declared Isaiah. "Behold, the days come that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left."

"Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken," Hezekiah answered humbly, but added, "for there shall be peace and truth in my days."

IV. SENNACHERIB

ALTHOUGH Hezekiah had humbled himself to Assyria to buy peace, he gained very little from the sacrifice of the temple silver and gold. If he could pay once, he must again, and on his refusal, Sennacherib, the new king of Assyria, swept back into Judah and laid siege to Lachish, thirty miles from Jerusalem. From Lachish he sent his Rabshekeh, or chief officer, with a message to Hezekiah.

Hezekiah sent three men to confer with Sennacherib's officers. They were Eliakim, the king's new treasurer, Shebna, the king's scribe, and Joah, the king's recorder. They met the Rabshekeh on the highway, where the Rabshekeh delivered his insolent message, while the crowds gathered around in curiosity.

"Say ye now to Hezekiah," he cried in the common language that all the onlookers could understand, "thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, 'On whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? If thou say to me, We trust in the Lord our God; is it not He whose altars Hezekiah has taken away?' Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them."

"I pray thee," interrupted Eliakim, "speak unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it; and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall."

The learned Jews understood the Syrian or Chaldean language as well as their own.

"Hath my master sent me only to thy master and to thee to speak these words?" demanded the Rabshekeh roughly. "Hath he not sent me also to the men that sit upon the wall?"

Then turning from Hezekiah's envoys, he raised his voice and addressed himself in Hebrew to the crowds beyond.

"Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria," he cried again. "Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you. Hearken not to Hezekiah; for thus saith the king of Assyria, 'Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me; and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree.' Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, 'The Lord will

deliver us.' Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?"

But out of all the throng not a Jew answered him, as Eliakim and Shebna and Joah turned and went back to the king in his palace. With their clothes rent in despair, the three envoys told Hezekiah of the Rabshekeh's insolence and of his appeal to the people to deliver Jerusalem unto the Assyrian.

Hezekiah rent his robe when he heard of it and put on sackcloth and went to the temple, sending Eliakim and Shebna in sackcloth to call Isaiah to him in the house of the Lord.

The messengers in their garments of mourning came to Isaiah. "Thus saith Hezekiah," they announced sadly, " 'This day is a day of trouble; it may be that the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshekeh; wherefore lift up thy prayer.' "

"Thus shall ye say unto your master," answered Isaiah. " 'Thus saith the Lord. Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.' "

The envoys carried this comforting news to Hezekiah as he prayed in the temple, and the Rabshekeh, having finished his errand and seeing that he had made no impression, returned to his master with his report.

Night came on and Hezekiah, comforted by the prophet's promise, went to his rest. He did not know how the God of Israel would save Jerusalem, but he trusted Him. We all know how he was saved, for every school boy knows Byron's poem well.

"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
His cohorts were gleaming with purple and gold."

On the blast that Isaiah had foretold "the angel of death spread his wings" and the haughty, mighty host was smitten by pestilence. When Sennacherib awoke in his camp in the morning, it was a camp of dead men.

"And the might of the Gentile unsmote by the sword
Had melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

Jerusalem was saved. Sennacherib with his few remaining followers escaped to Nineveh, where some years later he was slain by his own sons in his heathen temple, and was succeeded by his son Esar-haddon, whose great struggle was against the rising power of Babylon.

Hezekiah reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem, and when he died his subjects gave him a great funeral and buried him in the finest tomb of the royal sepulchre. Although his son Manasseh was only twelve years old when his father died, Manasseh became king of Judah.

Isaiah lived longer than Hezekiah. The book called by his name contains not only the history of his time and the record of his own character as a statesman and a patriot, but also a wonderful record of the perfect creation as Isaiah saw it, and many prophecies of the Messiah. There is no poetry in any language more beautiful than the latter part of Isaiah beginning with the fortieth chapter. This portion of Isaiah is sometimes called The Fifth Gospel.

Chapter XIII—MANASSEH, KING OF JUDAH

N spite of Hezekiah's long, good reign and in spite of his overthrow of idols and his restoration of the worship of God, the heathen party was still strong at court, and into their hands fell the little boy king Manasseh.

Manasseh grew up therefore to be one of the worst kings of Judah. He built again the high places which Hezekiah had overthrown and started once more the worship of idols. In the valley of Hinnom, south of the city walls, Manasseh set up the image of the terrible god Moloch and offered to it in sacrifice his own children. He carried the altars of Baal into the very courts of the temple, and there he had, too, altars where he worshiped the stars and the heavenly bodies in the fashion of the Assyrians. He had sacred white horses to draw his chariot in these religious ceremonies. Athaliah had torn down part of the temple to make a heathen temple; Ahaz had closed the temple doors, but Manasseh defiled the house of the Lord. The evil that Athaliah had started, Manasseh carried on to the destruction of Judah.

Ignoring Isaiah and Micah, Manasseh turned to wizards and familiar spirits for advice, using their enchantments to discern the future. The law he destroyed so thoroughly that there was scarcely a copy left in Judah. And those Jews who were still righteous, who lived by the law and listened to the prophets, Manasseh killed. His persecutions were so terrible in Jerusalem that the streets ran with blood. Isaiah probably was killed at this time. Manasseh as king of Judah did more harm to his kingdom than Edom or Moab or Ammon or Syria or even Assyria had ever been able to do. He thoroughly debased the nation.

And then across all this sin and degradation in the kingdom cut the stern voice of the prophet.

"Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols; therefore thus saith the God of Israel, 'Behold I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.' "

The words made no impression on Manasseh until his punishment came at the hands of Esar-haddon, king of Assyria and at that moment also master of Babylon. He swept down through Judah, captured Jerusalem and carried Manasseh in chains to Babylon.

Captive in a land that worshiped other gods, Manasseh saw how useless they were, and in his affliction turned his thought back to his own home and to the temple which God had once blessed with His presence; he recalled the glorious record of the children of Israel since the time of Abraham, and he repented that he had been among those who had tarnished its history and dimmed its torch, instead of keeping it bright and shining in the light of God.

Sorrowing for what he had done, Manasseh prayed to God for forgiveness, and if we read Manasseh's prayer in the Apocrypha we shall see that it is a prayer of very humble repentance for all his wrong-doing. It was answered, as such prayers always are. Manasseh was freed by Esar-haddon and allowed to return to reign in Jerusalem as a vassal of Assyria.

Back on his throne, Manasseh had a chance to prove his repentance genuine. He took away the idols from the temple and destroyed all the strange altars that he had built in Jerusalem. He repaired the brazen altars in the temple and commanded the priests to offer sacrifices on it once more. And he forbade his people to worship any heathen god or sacrifice on the high places throughout the country. Though they obeyed outwardly, Manasseh could not quench entirely the heathen spirit that he had started. It smoldered underneath, to break out again in later times.

Manasseh before his death built up again the walls of Jerusalem and strengthened the fenced cities of Judah. He reigned in all fifty-five years—longer than any king of Judah—but his people did not love him. At his death he was buried in his own garden instead of in the sepulchre of the kings. His son Amon reigned in his stead.

"WHEN HE HAD FINISHED THE READING, JOSIAH RENEWED WITH THE LORD THE COVENANT HE HAD MADE WITH HIS PEOPLE"

Chapter XIV—AMON, KING OF JUDAH

AMON was twenty-two years old when he began to reign. Although he must have known much more about his father's repentance than about his early sinning, Amon was no sooner on this throne than he overturned all the reforms of Manasseh's later years and restored idol worship, setting up the carved images that his father had cast down. But he was beloved neither by the court party whom he favored nor by the people at large. A plot was made against him, and the king was murdered in his own house after his short reign of two years.

The people of the land rose against his murderers and slew them and made Josiah, Amon's little son, king in his father's place. But though they had avenged Amon's murder, they did not give him honorable burial in the royal sepulchre, but buried him in the garden beside Manasseh.

Chapter XV—JOSIAH

JOSIAH, who was only eight years old at his father's death, had been evidently more impressed by Manasseh's repentance than by the two wicked years of Amon's reign for, excepting Hezekiah, Josiah was more like his ancestor David than any other king of Judah.

He gave his whole life to his effort to restore to Judah its old-time unity of national and religious spirit, but the influence of Athaliah and Manasseh had so undermined the patriotism of the country that the most that Josiah could accomplish was to check during his lifetime the downward tendency of the country. Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Nahum, who were the prophets of Josiah's reign, did their best to help the king bring his kingdom back to righteousness.

Josiah's first work was to cleanse and restore the temple as Joash and Hezekiah had done before him. Hilkiah the high priest superintended the work, and as he watched the men turn out from one of the offices the rubbish that had accumulated through the last two reigns, he saw something that made him cry out with delight. It was a copy of Moses' law which had escaped the destruction of Manasseh's reign.

Hilkiah called Shaphan the scribe and together they examined the roll and then carried it to the king. Josiah, when he saw that it was indeed the Law, summoned all the great men of Judah and with Hilkiah and Shaphan led the procession to the temple court, where Josiah ascended the big platform on which Solomon had prayed and Joash had been crowned, and standing by the pillar read aloud to the assembled congregation the words of Moses' Law. When he had finished the reading, Josiah renewed with the Lord the covenant He had made with His people.

"We will walk after the Lord," promised the king, "and keep His commandments with all our hearts."

"Amen!" cried all the people.

After this service Josiah went on with the purification of Jerusalem, destroying everything that had to do with the idol worship of Manasseh's and Amon's reigns. The altars were overthrown and the idols ground to powder and cast into the brook Kidron. The high places which Solomon had erected on the Mount of Olives to Moloch and Chemosh and Ashtoreth were destroyed with the rest; and the valley of Hinnom which had been consecrated to Moloch, Josiah appointed a rubbish heap, so that it would be despised by every one. Josiah did not stop at Judah but carried his reforms up into Samaria and overthrew the altar at Bethel, as the prophet of Rehoboam's time had prophesied.

When Israel and Judah were both cleansed, the temple restored, and the ark replaced in the Holy of Holies, Josiah called for a Passover, and joyously from all over the kingdom men came bringing rich gifts for offerings. Such a Passover had not been seen in the land since the children of Israel had settled in the country.

But although the people responded to Josiah's call and listened to the law and kept the Passover, they were not roused to a whole-souled patriotism and an eager striving after righteousness. They had seen the downfall of Israel, but they did not believe that the same evil could happen to them, and in their indifference they shut their ears to the words of the prophets. They would not listen to Jeremiah's vision of a seething pot with its mouth open toward the north where lay Babylon, nor to his words of warning.

"Out of the north," he declared, "an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land."

If Josiah had lived longer, he might perhaps with Jeremiah's help have saved his kingdom, but before he was forty years old he fell in the battle of Megiddo in a quarrel with Necho, king of Egypt.

He was buried with the greatest honors in Jerusalem, and Jeremiah, who knew that in losing Josiah Judah had lost its last hope, wrote a lamentation for

the dead king. It was sung by singing men and singing women always on the anniversary of the battle of Megiddo.

Chapter XVI—JEHOAHAZ, KING OF JUDAH

THE defeat at Megiddo left Judah open to the will of Necho. Josiah had left three sons, Jehoiakim, Jehoahaz, and Zedekiah. Although Jehoiakim was the oldest, the people of Judah preferred Jehoahaz for a king, and without consulting Necho set him on the throne of Judah. He was twenty-three years old and he reigned only three months, but in that time he did all that he could to undermine Josiah's reforms in the land, following in the ways of the worst of the kings of Judah. Then Pharaoh Necho came to Jerusalem, deposed Jehoahaz, and put in his place the older brother Jehoiakim as a vassal of Egypt. Jehoahaz, Necho took in chains to Egypt.

Chapter XVII—JEHOIAKIM, KING OF JUDAH

I. THE WARNING OF JEREMIAH

AFTER Pharaoh Necho had taken away Jehoahaz and made Jehoiakim king, he demanded one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold each year as tribute from Judah. By rigid taxation Jehoiakim raised the money, and all Judah suffered under it.

For eleven years Jehoiakim was king in Jerusalem, and they were years of extravagance and sin for the court and of misery for Judah, for not only were the king and nobles corrupt, but the priests also, and sometimes even the prophets. There were two prophets in this reign, however, Jeremiah and Habakkuk, who spent their time in trying to rouse the kingdom to a sense of its danger if it would not reform.

"Thus saith the Lord," cried Jeremiah in the streets of Jerusalem. "Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel; it is a mighty nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not; and they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat; they shall eat up thy

flocks and thy herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees; they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword; and I will cause Judah to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth.' "

In an idle, pleasure-loving city like Jerusalem at that time the bold words of Jeremiah were sure to make him enemies. When God had first called him to be a prophet Jeremiah, like Moses, had protested that he did not know how to speak to the people, but once started on his mission he knew no fear. He preached in the streets, in the city gates, in the gates of the temple, daily calling the nation to repentance and reformation. Jehoiakim left the prophet in contemptuous silence and the princes paid him no heed, but the priests were driven to a mad anger against the man who told the people that God cared less for burnt offerings than for obedience, and that unless they turned to righteousness, the temple itself had no power to save them.

One day as Jeremiah preached in the temple court the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the priests seized him.

"Thou shalt surely die," they shouted, as all the people crowded around. "Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, 'This city shall be desolate without an inhabitant?' "

The tumult in the temple courts on Mount Moriah became so great that the noise was heard in the king's palace where the princes of Judah were gathered, and in curiosity they came to find out the trouble. Ahikam was among them, a friend of Jeremiah, and a son of Shaphan the scribe of Josiah's reign. In their capacity of judges, the nobles took their places just outside one of the new temple gates. The frantic priests, Jeremiah in their midst, pushing this way and that, crowded up to the waiting princes.

"This man is worthy to die," they shouted, "for he hath prophesied against this city." The priests thought it far easier to get rid of the man who prophesied punishment for sin than to get rid of the sin itself.

The princes quieted the priests and gave Jeremiah a chance to speak. He spoke with dignity and calmness.

"The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city in the words that ye have heard," he said. "Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. As for me, I am in your hand; do with me as it seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears."

The little speech made a great impression on the princes. "This man is not worthy to die," they decided, "for he hath spoken unto us in the name of the Lord our God."

And one of the number, probably Ahikam, rose to his feet to address the crowd that had gathered.

"Micah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah," he said, "and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.' Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? Did he not fear the Lord and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented Him of the evil which He had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls."

Unwillingly the priests fell back, forced to submit to the dictates of Ahikam and the princes, and Jeremiah was again set free to preach with Habakkuk the evil days to come.

Events were fast adding facts to the prophets' words. Nineveh had fallen before the armies of Babylon, and the last king of Assyria had burned himself and his family in the royal palace rather than fall into the hands of Nabopolasser the Babylonish king. Then Nabopolasser and his son Nebuchadnezzar had driven Egypt out of the newly acquired possessions in Syria and come on down to conquer Judah.

For the time, however, Judah escaped, for Nabopolasser died after his victory over Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar had to hurry back to Babylon to secure the throne for himself. All that Judah suffered now was an enforcement of tribute and the carrying away of a few captives. Among them were four young men whom Nebuchadnezzar's steward Ashpenaz chose as servants to the king. Their names were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

II. THE FATE OF JEREMIAH'S BOOK

WHEN Jehoiakim had reigned four of the eleven years that he ruled, the word of the Lord came again to Jeremiah.

"Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel and against Judah and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

WHILE THE FRIGHTENED PRINCES LOOKED ON, JEHOIAKIM BURNED JEREMIAH'S BOOK, BIT BY BIT UNTIL IT WAS QUITE DESTROYED

Beside Ahikam Jeremiah had another close friend, Baruch the scribe who like all the scribes was skilled in writing. To Baruch Jeremiah dictated the prophecies he had already spoken, and Baruch wrote them on the roll of parchment which made the books of that day.

It took more than a year to write the book, but when it was finished Jeremiah spoke to his friend.

"I am shut up," he said, meaning that it was not safe for him to venture out openly. "I cannot go into the house of the Lord. Therefore go thou and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day; and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplications before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way; for great is the anger that the Lord hath pronounced against this people."

"Woe is me now," exclaimed Baruch, "for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow!"

Nevertheless Baruch went, for he knew that it would be permitted to him to read the roll but not to Jeremiah. The day he chose was a special fast day called in the superstitious hope that by flocking to the temple the people might avert the approaching doom, for Nebuchadnezzar was once more marching toward Jerusalem. The children of Israel had not learned what the prophet had tried so hard to teach them—that buildings and ceremonials are worthless unless the heart is with the prayer. "Obedience is better than sacrifice," Joel had cried. "I spoke not unto your fathers concerning burnt offerings," the Lord had said to Jeremiah, "but commanded them, 'Obey my voice.'" But Israel was slow to learn.

Up to the temple where the frightened, superstitious people were trying to propitiate the God they had forsaken, Baruch went with his prophet's book, and sitting down in one of the offices he began to read the words of warning. Some of the people had heard them before but, with the Chaldeans almost at their gates, the prophecies had new force. So terrible did they seem that some one ran quickly to the princes in the king's palace and told them what had happened.

The princes listened to the messenger and, interested, sent for Baruch to bring the roll into the palace and read it to them. Baruch went.

"Sit down now and read it in our ears," commanded the princes.

As he read, fear seized the princes as it had seized the people. Finally one of them interrupted Baruch.

"Tell us now," he said, "how didst thou write all these words at Jeremiah's mouth?"

"He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth," Baruch answered, "and I wrote them with ink in a book."

"We will surely tell the king of all these words," exclaimed the nobles. "Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah, and let no man know where ye be."

Baruch went back to Jeremiah, and together they went into hiding, while the princes carried the roll in to read to Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, where he sat in his winter palace warming himself by an open brazier of coals. Josiah had given his life to the attempt to restore national and religious unity to Judah. Jehoiakim was devoting his life to the destruction of his country's religion and government. But the nobles thought, with Nebuchadnezzar on his way to Jerusalem, Jehoiakim would at last be impressed with Jeremiah's words.

As nearly as they could remember, the eager princes told the king the words of the prophet's book, and the king listened.

"Fetch me the roll," he said, when they had finished.

When it was brought one of the nobles read it aloud. For a few moments the king did not interrupt. Then he stretched out his hand and took the roll. With his penknife, while the frightened princes looked on, Jehoiakim slit off a strip from the book and burned it in his brazier; then he cut and burned another bit, and another, till Jeremiah's book was quite destroyed. And among those who stood by, holding their breath at the bold deed, there were only three who dared beg Jehoiakim not to destroy the roll.

When the last scrap had been burned, Jehoiakim sent officers to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch. But the Lord had hidden them and they were saved from the king's wrath.

Jehoiakim had lost now his last chance to save his kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar, after he had made himself king of Babylon, came back to finish the subjugation of Judah. By submitting to a large tribute Jehoiakim bought his own life.

For three years he kept faith with Babylon, and then tried to throw off the Chaldean yoke, although his kingdom was so weak that he was not able to oppose the Ammonites and Moabites who overran Judah. His revolt brought quick punishment. Nebuchadnezzar once more swooped on Jerusalem, put Jehoiakim in chains, and carried off whatever booty he could lay hands on.

We have no sure history of Jehoiakim's death, but we know from Jeremiah's words that it was not glorious.

"They shall not lament for Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah,"

writes Jeremiah, "saying, 'Ah, my brother! Ah Lord!' or 'Ah, his glory!' He shall be buried with the burial of an ass cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

For the word of the Lord had come to Jehoiakim and he had covered his ears.

Chapter XVIII—JEHOIACHIN, KING OF JUDAH

JEHOIAKIM left a young son named Jehoiachin, eighteen years old at the time he ascended the throne, and almost as soon as his reign began the Chaldean army came up again to besiege Jerusalem. For three months the city resisted, and for those three months Jehoiachin was king. Through this time, too, Jeremiah dared come out of hiding and renew his bold warnings.

"'As I live,' saith the Lord," excaimed Jeremiah, "'though thou Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence. And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother, into another country where ye were not born, and there shall ye die. But to the land whereunto ye desire to return, thither shall ye not return.'"

Jehoiachin did not punish Jeremiah for his denunciation, but neither did he repent, although as the days and weeks went on he saw that Jerusalem must fall, and when Nebuchadnezzar himself joined the forces before the city, Jehoiachin knew that his end had come. It was useless longer to rebel, and by submission Jehoiachin might gain better terms. Humbly the king of Judah, his queen mother and the princes, shorn of their grandeur, went out of the city to meet Nebuchadnezzar and to beg his mercy.

Nebuchadnezzar was not a generous conqueror. He put Jehoiachin and his mother in chains, stripped the temple of all its precious vessels and gold adornments that Babylon had coveted since Hezekiah showed them to Merodach-baladin's envoys, gathered together the princes and warriors and skillful artisans and priests and prophets, and bore them all away to Babylon. Among them was the prophet Ezekiel.

Judah was not, like Israel, entirely wiped out, for Nebuchadnezzar put on the throne Zedekiah, the third son of Josiah, to reign over the poor remnant that was left, and Zedekiah accepted the throne as vassal of Babylon.

Chapter XIX—ZEDEKIAH, KING OF JUDAH

I. THE BASKET OF FIGS

ZEDEKIAH was only twenty-one years old when he began to reign, but he soon showed that he resembled his brothers instead of his father.

When Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah king, he made him swear by the God of Israel always to be the faithful vassal of Babylon, and then left him to his nominal reign over weakened Judah. Though the prophets came daily with urgent appeals to turn again to the God of their fathers, all that they accomplished was to call down mockery and persecution on themselves, for Zedekiah ruled as Jehoiakim had before him.

However, the persecution did not stop the warnings. Free once more after Jehoiakim's death, Jeremiah appeared in the streets of Jerusalem and in the temple. He had now a vision to tell.

"Behold," he said, "two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the Lord, after that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with their carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are the first ripe; and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. Then the Lord said unto me, 'What seest thou, Jeremiah?'

"And I said, 'Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.' "

" 'Like these good figs,' came the word of the Lord, 'so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans, for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

" 'And as the evil figs which cannot be eaten, so will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this

land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

" 'Concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the Lord, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not when he carried away captive Jehoiachin king of Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem, they shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be seventy years until the day that I visit them; and then I will bring them up and restore them to this place.' "

II. THE WOODEN YOKE

SO long as Isaiah had lived he had tried to rouse in Judah the sense of national unity and had done his best to keep the country free from any foreign alliance. The time was past for that policy as Judah had made herself too weak to stand alone. Her safety now lay in choosing the ally that would be best able to protect her.

There could be no doubt that Babylon was the only ally at this time for Judah, and to Babylon Zedekiah had sworn solemn allegiance by the name of the God of Israel. There was no reason to turn from that alliance except Zedekiah's fickle fancy, which was seized by a fancy to join Judah to Egypt, who had proved always a broken reed in time of trouble. The court supported Zedekiah, and he found also false prophets who consented to pronounce his decision good. Jeremiah was insistent on the allegiance with Babylon.

With a wooden yoke on his shoulders Jeremiah appeared in the temple court in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign, and when the people crowded around him to know what the yoke meant, Jeremiah spoke.

"Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, and live," Jeremiah cried. "Hearken not unto the words of the false prophets who say unto you that ye shall not serve the king of Babylon, for they prophesy a lie unto you."

Among the listening throng was Hananiah, one of those false prophets whom Jeremiah was speaking about. Angrily Hananiah answered Jeremiah.

"Thus speaketh the Lord to *me,*" he boasted, " 'I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon. And I will bring again to this place Jehoiachin the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah that went into Babylon; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.' "

The throng looked from Jeremiah who foretold Judah's destruction to Hananiah who promised the destruction of Babylon. Which was it to be? It would be much pleasanter to believe the more cheerful promise, but there was not after all much comfort in crying "peace, peace," when there was no peace. The people were perplexed.

"Amen," Jeremiah answered Hananiah. "The Lord do so, to bring again the vessels of the Lord's house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place. Nevertheless, hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people. The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. The prophet which prophesieth peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then it shall be known that the Lord hath truly sent him."

Hananiah, made furious by Jeremiah's contradiction, snatched the wooden yoke from the prophet's shoulders and broke it in two pieces.

"Thus saith the Lord," proclaimed Hananiah, " 'even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years.' "

"Thus saith the Lord," repeated Jeremiah solemnly, " 'Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.' Hear now, Hananiah: The Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord, 'Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth; this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord.' "

Before the year was out Hananiah was dead, but by stirring false hope in the people he had indeed laid upon them a yoke of iron not to be broken.

III. THE SECRET MEETING

THE first captives taken to Babylon from Judah had been carried to the city of Babylon itself. Those whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken away with Jehoiachin had been established in a colony at Tel-Abib on the river Chebar, a tributary of the Euphrates. The two great prophets of the captivity therefore, Daniel and Ezekiel, were both now living in Chaldea.

The false prophecies of the immediate fall of Babylon and the restoration of Jehoiachin had reached Tel-Abib and set the colony there astir with restlessness and discontent, although Ezekiel was trying as hard in Tel-Abib as Jeremiah in Jerusalem to turn the hearts of his people to the God of Israel, but they found it

much pleasanter to look forward again to material ease than patiently to serve God in their afflictions.

In the meantime in Jerusalem things were going from bad to worse, for the weak Zedekiah, unmindful of Jeremiah's warnings, had in the ninth year of his reign at last broken his oath to Nebuchadnezzar and protected himself against Babylon by an alliance with Egypt. The act brought down on Zedekiah's head the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar.

The Chaldean troops swept down upon Judah and invested Jerusalem. Then every one, from king to peasant, called to mind Jeremiah's many exhortations and wished they had obeyed them. Zedekiah, alarmed at the consequences of his deed, sent messengers to Jeremiah.

"Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us," he said. "Will the Lord deal according to all His wondrous works, that Nebuchadnezzar may depart from us?"

"Thus saith the Lord of Israel," Jeremiah answered. "'Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city. And I will deliver Zedekiah, and his servants and the people, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity nor have mercy. And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be till I visit him. Though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.'"

Unable in his weakness either to obey Jeremiah or to punish him, Zedekiah sent him to the prison court, where the prophet continued his warnings against Egypt and his declaration that the only safety for Judah lay in submission to Babylon. If Judah would trust Babylon, Jerusalem should not be destroyed, and the captives in Babylon—the good remnant—should return after seventy years to inhabit the land once more.

Zedekiah, still hoping for help from Egypt, was overjoyed about this time because Pharaoh marched an army out of Egypt to relieve Jerusalem. When Nebuchadnezzar was forced to withdraw his army for the time being from the siege of the city to meet the Egyptians, Jerusalem went wild with joy. Now what of Jeremiah's prophecies? And was Hananiah a false prophet after all when he had said that Nebuchadnezzar's yoke should be taken from Judah?

But Jeremiah knew that Nebuchadnezzar would soon be back. "Thus saith the God of Israel," he declared to Judah, "'Behold, Pharaoh's army which is come forth to help you shall return to Egypt, into their own land. And the

Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire.' "

Then Jeremiah seized the time when in Nebuchadnezzar's absence the city gates were open to go to his native town of Anathoth, four miles from Jerusalem.

In Anathoth was Irijah, son of Hananiah, and he had inherited his father's hatred of Jeremiah. As soon therefore as Irijah saw the prophet out of Jerusalem he accused him of treachery.

"Thou stealest away to the Chaldeans," he declared.

"It is false," contradicted Jeremiah. "I go not to the Chaldeans."

His denial was useless however. He was seized, brought back to Jerusalem, scourged, and put into a cell in the prison, and there he stayed many days. While he was there Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh and brought his army back to besiege Jerusalem.

Then Zedekiah ordered that Jeremiah should be taken from the cell and brought to him, for in his weakness he knew not where to turn for help. He might have been inclined to listen to Jeremiah if he had not been so under the power of the nobles.

"Is there any word from the Lord?" asked the weak and anxious king of the persecuted prophet.

"There is," Jeremiah answered. " 'Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.' "

In agony the king turned away without a word. Jeremiah watched him in silence for a moment, and then he spoke again.

"What have I offended against thee," he asked, "or against thy servants or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, 'The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?' Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king, let my supplication be accepted before thee, that thou cause me not to return to prison, lest I die there."

Zedekiah sent Jeremiah back to prison, but did not put him in a cell. The prophet was merely placed under guard in the prison court.

But Jeremiah was not safe. The nobles hated him more than ever and were detemined that he should die for his bold prophecies, and in a body sought the king.

"We beseech thee, O king," they cried, "let this man be put to death; for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in the city, and the hands of the people, in speaking such words unto them; for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt."

"Behold, he is in your hands," answered Zedekiah shortly; "for the king is not he that can do anything against you."

The princes seized Jeremiah and put him into a horrible place, a deep cistern where, although there was no water, there was deep, slimy mud, and where he could get neither light nor air when the trap door was closed. But in his affliction Jeremiah found a friend. Ebed-melech a servant of the king found out what had happened to Jeremiah, and as soon as he could get private speech with the king, he went to Zedekiah.

"My lord the king," he exclaimed, "these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, for he is like to die of hunger in the place where he is."

Zedekiah, troubled at Jeremiah's danger, was glad to find some one who would act for him. "Take thirty men with thee," he commanded, "and take up Jeremiah the prophet from the dungeon before he die."

In the cold and dark and slime Jeremiah was waiting, exclaiming like Job, we may be sure, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." And as he waited, the prison door opened above his head, and along with the fresher air he heard friendly voices. Then on a cord some soft old rags were lowered to him.

"Put now," said Ebed-melech, "these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords."

So Jeremiah, padding the rope with the rags, fastened the rope under his arms, and from above the men pulled the prophet free of the mud up out of the cistern, and he stood once more on firm ground. When he was cleaned and fed, the king sent for him.

"I will ask thee a thing," said the king; "hide nothing from me."

"If I declare it unto thee," asked Jeremiah, "wilt thou not surely put me to death? And if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?"

"As the Lord liveth," swore the king, "I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hands of these men that seek thy life."

And once more Jeremiah repeated the clear, simple words he had so often spoken in the king's ears.

"If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then shall thy soul live, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and thou shalt live, and thine house. But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand."

"I am afraid of the Jews that are captive in Babylon," said the king. "If Nebuchadnezzar gives me over into their hands, they will mock me."

"He will not deliver thee to them," cried Jeremiah. "Obey, I beseech thee, the word of the Lord which I speak unto thee; so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live."

But Zedekiah could come to no decision. Once more he ordered Jeremiah to be taken to the prison court and guarded there. But as he was being led away, the king called back and spoke to him secretly.

"If the princes hear that I have talked with thee," he said, "and come to thee saying, 'Declare unto us what thou hast said unto the king, and what the king said to thee,' then thou shalt say, 'I presented my supplication unto the king that he would not cause me to return to prison to die there.' Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die."

Jeremiah was taken back to the prison court, and the nobles did come to him to hear about his interview with the king. But Jeremiah kept his own counsel, and finally they left him alone.

IV. THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

WHILE the siege went on Jeremiah was kept in the prison court and not molested. It was a year and a half that the siege lasted in all, and before the princes yielded, the city was on the verge of starvation. Then finally on the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, the Chaldeans made a breach in the walls and entered the city. Nebuchadnezzar was not there; he was besieging Riblah near by.

The nobles who had defied Nebuchadnezzar so long resisted no longer. Gathering in the king's palace, they stole by night through the palace garden, out of the city through a secret gate in the wall, and down toward Jericho, taking the king and his family with them. As he fled through the dark, Zedekiah must have wished that he had long ago taken Jeremiah's advice.

The victorious Chaldeans, sacking Jerusalem, had men also to spare to send after the fugitive king. They overtook him in the plains of Jericho and brought him to Riblah into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar, after killing Zedekiah's sons, put out Zedekiah's eyes and carried him in chains to Babylon.

The Chaldeans stripped Jerusalem of its treasures. They carried away from the temple the golden vessels, the brass laver, and the two tall brass pillars, Boaz and Jachim, which Solomon had set up in the front of the temple. Then they destroyed the city; the palace and the houses were burned, the temple destroyed, and the city wall thrown down. As the walls fell Edom, Moab and Ammon,

ancient enemies of Judah, stood by crying aloud in their joy, "Raze it! Raze it!"

When Nebuchadnezzar left the ruined city, he appointed as Jewish governor of Judah Gedaliah, son of Jeremiah's old friend Ahikam. It was a desolate country that Gedaliah was set over. With Jerusalem burned, the temple gone, the priests killed, and everything that pertained to king or court carried away to Babylon, Gedaliah's realm was only the country outside Jerusalem and the peasants who worked it. Was it a wonder that Jeremiah, as he left Jerusalem with the other captives, was so sad that he could write a lament, which we still have in the Book of Lamentations?

As Jeremiah lamented the downfall of Judah, the last tribe of the children of Israel, did he wonder what had become of the promises of God to Noah and Abraham and David? Close to God as he lived, Jeremiah must have remembered his vision of the good figs and turned his thought to the little remnant of the nation in Babylon waiting to return to Jerusalem, for though the city was in ruins and its last king carried into captivity, that little remnant in Babylon was holding the torch alight to keep the sacred fire burning till the Messiah should come.

The Captivity of Judah

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

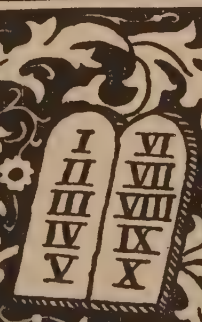
IN THE BOOKS OF

II KINGS (XXV:22-30)

II CHRONICLES (XXXVI:5-22)

JEREMIAH (XXXIX-6-11)

EZEKIEL · DANIEL



Chapter I—THE CAPTIVITY IN JERUSALEM WITH THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

HEN Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, Jeremiah was still in prison, but on account of his unwavering loyalty to Babylon Jeremiah was released and given his choice of going honorably to Babylon or staying in Judah under the protection of Gedaliah whom Nebuchadnezzar had made governor of the country. Jeremiah chose to stay with his people in Judah.

Under Gedaliah's rule the country was prosperous. But before long Gedaliah was murdered by a renegade Jew, and Johanan, one of Gedaliah's captains, assumed control of the province. Johanan, afraid that Judah would be punished for the murder of the governor whom Nebuchadnezzar had appointed, fled to Bethlehem, thinking from there to go down to Egypt for safety.

While he was in Bethlehem Johanan remembered Jeremiah, and asked him if it were better to stay in Judah or flee to Egypt.

"Thus saith the Lord," answered Jeremiah, " 'Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, for I am with you to save you if ye abide in this land.' "

Notwithstanding this promise and Jeremiah's remonstrances, Johanan and his followers fled to Egypt, and Jeremiah, faithful to the last to the people he could not save, went with them.

Thus the faithless remnant in Judah was lost, and there remained to fulfill God's promise the remnant of Babylon—the good figs which Jeremiah had seen in his vision.

Chapter II—THE CAPTIVES AT TEL-ABIB WITH THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

N the Jewish colony at Tel-Abib on the Chebar, king Jehoiachin, who had reigned but three months in Jerusalem, lived year after year as a captive. And in this same colony was the young priest Ezekiel.

In the fifth year of the captivity, while Zedekiah was still ruling in Judah, the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel.

"Son of man," said the Lord, "I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. Now arise, go forth into the plain, and I will talk with thee there."

The young priest arose and went out into the open by the river Chebar, and there he saw the glory of the Lord, as Moses had seen it in the burning bush; and Isaiah in his vision of the seraphim; and Jeremiah when the Lord put His words into his mouth. At the vision Ezekiel fell prone until the spirit of the Lord brought him to his feet again to face what lay before him. It took courage, for it is no easy task to turn men from sin to righteousness.

Ezekiel's writings, like Jeremiah's, denounce the sins of Israel, foretell its doom, and plead with the people to return to their God who loves them, but where Jeremiah states his case in plain words, Ezekiel frames his in visions and stories.

Except for Ezekiel's writings we know very little of the colony at Tel-Abib. For thirty-seven years Jehoiachin lived there a prisoner until in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-merodach, the Jewish king was released from prison, restored to dignity, given fitting garments, and fed from the king's table. So though he never returned to Jerusalem, he passed the last years of his life in comfort.

Of Josiah's three sons, Jehoiakim had died a violent and despised death, Jehoahaz was in prison in Egypt, and Zedekiah, blinded, a prisoner in Babylon. Of all the family only Josiah's grandson Jehoiachin knew any peace in his old age.

Chapter III—THE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON WITH THE PROPHET DANIEL

I. THE FALLEN IDOL

WHEN in Jehoiakim's time the Chaldeans had, in their first invasion of Judah, carried captives back to Babylon, there had been among the number four boys of royal descent, Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego. Nebuchadnezzar's steward, Ashpenaz, had picked them out as the four strongest, cleverest, handsomest and most virtuous lads he could find among all the princes in Jehoiakim's kingdom, for Nebuchadnezzar wanted such youths to be instructed in all the learning of the Chaldeans before they should take their place in the Babylonian court to serve the king. Nebuchadnezzar allowed three years for this course of study, and ordered that during that time the four young princes should be fed from the king's table.

But the young princes, brought up simply in Judah, knew that they would be better off if they kept themselves free from the luxury of the court, and, refusing the daintiness of the king's table, they ate only pulse and drank only water.

The boys studied faithfully all that they were taught, but they already knew more than the court teachers, for they held in their hearts the certainty that it was God who in wisdom and love and righteousness ruled the lives of men.

Daniel was able soon to prove the power of God. Nebuchadnezzar waked up one morning much troubled because he had forgotten a dream that had come to him in the night. He called all his magicians together and commanded them to repeat his dream. In despair the magicians promised to interpret the dream if the king would relate it, but they asserted that no man on earth could know another's dream.

In his anger Nebuchadnezzar ordered that every wise man in Babylon should be killed, and the order included the four young Jewish princes. When Arioch, captain of the guard, came to seize them Daniel asked boldly why they were arrested.

"Destroy not the wise men of Babylon," he said, when Arioch had told him. "Bring me before the king and I will interpret his dream."

"Art thou able to make known unto me my dream and its interpretation?" asked Nebuchadnezzar when Daniel stood before him.

"The secret which the king hath demanded," Daniel answered, "the magi-

cians cannot show unto the king, but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets."

Then Daniel related the dream. Nebuchadnezzar had seen a great image with a head of gold, a breast of silver, thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet part iron and part clay. And while Nebuchadnezzar had looked, he had seen in his vision a stone, cut without hands, fall upon the image and break it to pieces.

"This is the dream, O king," Daniel ended, "and we will tell thee the interpretation. Thou art the head of gold. After thee shall arise another kingdom, the breast of silver; and a third kingdom of brass. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, but as the feet were part of clay, so this kingdom shall be broken."

Nebuchadnezzar heaped great honors on Daniel for his wisdom. Afterward the dream proved true, for Persia succeeded Babylon, Greece subdued Persia, and Rome the iron kingdom ruled the whole world. The stone made without hands was the Christ who in time to come would bring the kingdom of heaven on earth, and by its spiritual power overthrow the autocracy of material kingdoms.

Daniel himself had a vision later in which he saw a huge goat with one horn overpower a ram, and thereupon the goat's one horn split into four smaller horns. In that dream the ram stood for Persia and the goat for Alexander the Great of Greece, who would add Persia to his kingdom, and, on his death, would divide his great kingdom into four smaller kingdoms, and give one kingdom apiece to four of his favorite generals.

So Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's both came true.

II. THE GOLDEN IMAGE

THE city of Babylon in the time of Nebuchadnezzar was renowned for its learning, its commerce and its size. The river Euphrates flowed through Babylon and the city walls were sixty miles in circumference; Nebuchadnezzar's palace lay in a huge park, where were the hanging gardens of Babylon—one of the wonders of the world.

Of this wealthy and luxurious city Nebuchadnezzar counted himself the head, placing himself even above the gods, and that all his subjects might be made to feel his greatness, Nebuchadnezzar erected in the city a great image of gold seventy-five feet high, and ordered all his people to worship it.

"To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations and languages," cried his heralds aloud, "that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden

"IN THE MIDST OF THE REVEL, SUDDENLY A HAND APPEARED ON THE WALL AND BELSHAZZAR SAW THE HAND TRACE SLOWLY AGAINST THE WALL FOUR WORDS AND DISAPPEAR"

image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up. And whoso falleth not down and worshipeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

When the signal was given therefore all the princes and captains bent the knee in worship to the great golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. But there were in the assembly at least four young men who paid no homage to the golden image.

Glad of a chance to bring the Jewish youths into trouble, the nobles went to Nebuchadnezzar.

"O king, live forever," they cried. "Thou, O king, hast made a decree that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image; and whoso falleth not down and worshipeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

In his rage at not being obeyed Nebuchadnezzar ordered the three youths to be cast into a burning fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than its usual temperature. The three boys were bound and cast helpless into the midst of the devouring flames.

The king, watching the deed, gave a sudden exclamation. "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the flame? Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Then as near as he could go safely to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar went, his anger melted by his consternation.

"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God," he called, "come forth and come hither."

Obediently Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the flames and approached the king; the fourth had vanished. As the three boys drew near, the crowd of nobles, incredulous, pushed forward to see these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was there any smell of fire upon them. They could not believe it.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego," cried Nebuchadnezzar, "who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in Him."

In the Apocrypha we may read the song of thanksgiving of the "three holy

children," and we shall find that in some of our churches it is a very familiar hymn of praise.

III. THE WRITING ON THE WALL

SO long as Nebuchadnezzar lived, Babylon remained the head of gold that it had appeared in the image in the dream. When Nebuchadnezzar died, he was succeeded by his son Evil-merodach, who freed Jehoiachin from his captivity. After Evil-merodach came one king after another, till finally Belshazzar was king of Babylon.

Before Belshazzar ruled in Babylon, Darius the Mede and his nephew Cyrus the Persian had started their series of conquests which were to replace the head of gold with the breast of silver in the history of the world. And now in Belshazzar's time the Persian armies were camped around the walls of Babylon.

The siege did not so greatly trouble Belshazzar in his idle luxury, for Babylon's walls were impregnable, and he had provisions within his gates and water in plenty, for did not the river Euphrates run through the city with its full supply? But to propitiate his god, Belshazzar made a great feast and bade one thousand of his nobles drink their wine from the sacred vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had brought from the temple at Jerusalem.

In the midst of the drunken revel, suddenly a hand appeared on the wall opposite the king, and Belshazzar saw the hand trace slowly against the wall four words and disappear. The words remained: *"Mene Mene, Tekel, Upharsin."*

So frightened that his knees smote together, Belshazzar cried out for the magicians, but when they came, they could not interpret the writing. Then some one remembered Daniel, and he was sent for.

"Art thou that Daniel whom Nebuchadnezzar brought out of Jewry?" Belshazzar asked.

"I am that Daniel," he answered.

"If thou canst read the writing," said the frightened king, "thou shalt be third ruler in the kingdom."

"This is the interpretation," Daniel said. *"Mene;* God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. *Tekel;* thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting. *Upharsin;* thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

Although Daniel's words foretold the destruction of Babylon, Belshazzar kept his promise and made Daniel third ruler in the kingdom. But Belshazzar's reign was ended.

While he had been keeping his feast, Darius and Cyrus outside the walls had been digging above Babylon a huge lake into which they had turned the waters of the Euphrates. Then silently through the water gates, over the dry river bed, the Persian army had entered Babylon and seized all the spots of advantage in the city before the Chaldeans even knew that a stranger was among them. Belshazzar was slain, and Darius and Cyrus became masters of Babylon.

IV. THE DEN OF LIONS

THE children of Israel had now been in exile almost the seventy years which Jeremiah had predicted, and the years had taught them much. Brothers in a strange land, they had learned for the first time the real meaning of national unity; away from the holy city and the sacred temple, they were realizing that the material things were but symbols of their religion which was the spiritual worship of a God who was Spirit; in a country where their conquerors worshiped idols of gold or silver or stone, the Jews saw thoroughly and finally the uselessness of idol worship, and hated it as fiercely as they hated their oppressors; never again in their future history did they fall into that sin.

They turned, too, eagerly to the Scriptures which the scribes were now gathering into the sacred writings. They had the Book of the Law, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs, the utterances of the Prophets, and the bits of history which the Chroniclers had written down. They studied them in exile, glad that they were Jews, the nation chosen of God to carry the great light down through the ages. While they read the Scriptures in Hebrew, however, they learned at the same time to speak the language of the country, and from that came eventually the Aramaic, which later the Jews used in their ordinary speech. It was of course the presence among them of the priests and the scribes and the prophets that turned the exiles' thoughts toward God and kept them brave and alert. Ezekiel and Daniel did for the captivity what Elijah and Elisha did for Israel.

When Darius the Mede took possession of Babylon and found Daniel in his authority of third ruler of the land, he did not take from the prophet his newly given honors. He was able to see the dignity and wisdom of the Jew and loved him at once. When he picked out one hundred and twenty princes to set over the land, he put Daniel at their head.

Daniel without ostentation discharged his great duties and kept on with his simple way of life in a heathen kingdom, praying three times a day to the God of Israel. That in itself was enough to raise up bitter enemies among the nobles over whom he was set.

The one hundred and twenty princes came together in an endeavor to find something in Daniel's rule which they might report to the king. But they could find nothing; the wisdom and the uprightness of his acts were above reproach. Yet the nobles could not rest until they had humbled Daniel.

"We shall not find any occasion aganist this Daniel," one of them said finally in despair, "except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." And with that thought they went to the king.

"Establish this decree, O king," they asked, "that whosoever shall ask a petition of God or man for thirty days from any one but the king shall be cast into a den of lions."

Darius did not think of Daniel, but with pleased vanity signed the decree. And a decree of Medes and Persians could never be recalled.

Daniel heard about it but did not change his manner of life to suit the decree. Instead, he went home, opened his window toward Jerusalem, and on his knees prayed to God. The nobles, who were watching, went to the king.

"That Daniel," they asserted, "which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day."

Sick at heart, Darius turned away. Why had he not thought before of Daniel? And how could he save him now from the malice of his enemies? All day long till the sun went down Darius tried to find some excuse to retract a law of the Medes.

As the sun set the princes came to him again. "Know, O king," they said, "that the law of the Medes and Persians is that no decree or statute which the king establisheth may be changed."

Abruptly the king dismissed them and sent for Daniel. "I cannot save thee," he said, "but thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee," and then Darius signed the order that was to throw Daniel into the lion's den.

Did Daniel have then the words of the Psalm which is our sure refuge to-day? Whether he could repeat just those words or not, he was sure of their truth. "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder." His confidence was in the God who had taken his friends through the fiery furnace.

With a calm heart Daniel went with his guard to the cold cell where the lions were kept, while Darius went to his private room in the luxurious palace. The king could not sleep nor would he have any music or amusement to pass the time. As well as he knew how he spent the night in prayer to Daniel's God.

At the first streak of light Darius went forth from his palace to the den where Daniel had been fastened in all night with the fierce beasts. Darius could not

hope that his friend would still be alive and yet, Daniel had believed that his God could save him!

Almost afraid to speak but unable to keep down his anxiety, Darius in a trembling voice cried out to his prisoner, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the lions?"

Back from the pit came the cheerful answer, "O king, live forever! My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

With an exceeding great joy Darius gave orders for the immediate release of Daniel. And when Daniel came up out of the den no manner of hurt was found on him because he had trusted in God.

The Restoration

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE BOOKS OF

II CHRONICLES (XXXVI: 22-23)

EZRA · NEHEMIAH · ESTHER

HAGGAI · ZECHARIAH · MALACHI

Chapter I—ZERUBBABEL THE PRINCE

DARIUS the Mede reigned two years over Babylon and was succeeded by Cyrus the Persian, who came to the throne seventy years after Jehoiakim had been taken prisoner. He too loved Daniel, and from the aged prophet learned so much of the history of the Jews and of their God that he issued an edict allowing all Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem if they wished.

Zerubbabel, a prince of the royal line, was set at the head of the returning Jews, and to him with joy and laughter and thanksgiving flocked his countrymen, until the expedition numbered fifty thousand people. Those who stayed in Babylon gave presents to those who were returning, and best of all Cyrus gave back the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple.

In the same month that they had left Egypt eight hundred years before, the Jews started under Zerubbabel to march out from their second captivity. They were months on the way, and when they finally reached Jerusalem they found it a dreary place. Its walls were overthrown, the houses burned, and the temple destroyed. But without any murmuring for the comforts they had left behind, they began at once with stout hearts to repair the ruins. Joshua, the high priest, restored the great altar, while Zerubbabel looked to the housing of his people, and when this was accomplished they began their work of rebuilding the temple.

All the Levites over twenty years old were divided into relays of builders. The lower foundation stones of the temple still stood, and upon those, day after day, they patiently laid one stone upon another, till course by course the wall finally rose high enough to carry the wooden superstructure. Cyrus had granted them permission to cut cedars from Lebanon for that.

The mixed races in the country round about saw with displeasure the restoration of Jerusalem. At first they tried to have a hand in the building, but when Zerubbabel refused their help, they used every effort to hinder the work. At last they sent envoys to Cyrus to tell him that the Jews, when they had rebuilt Jerusalem, meant to revolt from the Persian rule and with Zerubbabel as their king make Judah once more an independent nation.

Cyrus was too busy when the accusation reached him to look into it at once,

but he stopped the Jews' work for the present. Week after week Zerubbabel waited, with the temple no higher than its foundation, hoping that the order would come to get to work again.

Apparently however Zerubbabel did nothing but hope. Cyrus died and was succeeded by Cambyses, and Cambyses was followed by another Darius. And still the temple was not built. Then to Zerubbabel came the prophet Haggai, rebuking him for his indifference and urging him to carry on the building of the temple.

"The people say," declared Haggai, "that the time is not come for the Lord's house to be built. Is it a time for you to dwell in ceiled houses, and this house to lie waste?"

Stirred to shame by the prophet's address, Zerubbabel started once more at the work so long delayed. But scarcely had he begun when Tatnai, Persian governor of Samaria, came to question the action and try to stop the building.

As Tatnai had no order from Persia he could not force the Jews to stop, but dissatisfied with the proceeding, he sent messengers to King Darius telling him that the Jewish colony was seized with a sudden zeal to restore their temple, and that they claimed to be working under a decree of Cyrus.

Darius, when he received the message, searched the archives of the kingdom and found Cyrus' decree. Then he sent his edict to Tatnai.

"Let the Jews build this house of God," Darius commanded, "and I make a decree that out of the king's goods expenses be given to these men, that they be not hindered. I, Darius, have made a decree. Let it be done with speed."

According to Darius' decree Tatnai generously helped Zerubbabel in his building, and as it went forward the young prophet Zechariah came to Zerubbabel with words of encouragement.

"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel," Zechariah said, " 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit. The hands of Zerubabbel have laid the foundations of this house; his hands shall also finish it.' "

Encouraged by the help of Tatnai and the words of Zechariah, Zerubbabel drove the work forward. The temple was four years in building, but when it was finished and dedicated, and the temple service again established, the people kept the Passover with joy, as they had in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah, looking forward with gladness to the prosperous days ahead.

But Zechariah with his prophet's wisdom saw further than any of them. Micah in Hezekiah's time had blessed Bethlehem because out of that little town was to come forth the One who was to be ruler in Israel. Now Zechariah added to the prophecy.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion," he said; "shout, O daughter of Jeru-

salem; behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

And that was the way years later that the Messiah entered Jerusalem.

Chapter II—ESTHER THE QUEEN

THROUGH the rest of Darius' reign the Jews lived in prosperity in Jerusalem and Babylon, not only because Darius was kindly disposed toward them, but because he was now engaged in fighting the third great power of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The gold had been Babylon, the silver Media and Persia, and now the brass, Greece, was pushing itself into prominence, and the famous battle of Marathon proved Greece stronger than Persia. On the death of Darius, Xerxes his son, ascended the Persian throne, and his armies too were defeated by Greece in the great naval battle of Salamis.

Xerxes, who is called in the Bible Ahasuerus, let his soldiers fight, while he in his palace in Shushan gave himself over to luxury. When he had been three years on the throne, he made a great feast to which he invited all the princes and nobles of Persia and Babylon and the provinces. On the last day of the feast Ahasuerus commanded that his queen, Vashti, should join him in the palace court, but when he sent his chamberlains for her, she refused to come. Ahasuerus, very angry at her disobedience, turned to one of his nobles and asked how the queen should be punished.

"If it please the king," advised the noble, "let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and Medes, that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she."

Ahasuerus, quick in his anger, signed the decree, and sent it posting all over the kingdom. This order against Vashti was followed by another proclaiming that from all parts of the kingdom the most beautiful girls should be brought to the king's palace, that from their number he might choose a new queen.

There was living in Shushan a Jew named Mordecai, who had brought up his young cousin Esther because her parents were dead. She was a beautiful girl and Mordecai loved her as if she had been his own daughter. When he heard the king's edict he was sure there could not be in all the kingdom a girl as lovely and good as Esther, and he took her therefore to the king's palace, but he did not

say that she was a Jewess. As soon as the king saw her he chose her as his queen. There was a great feast to mark the wedding and all the land was glad and gay.

Every day Mordecai came to the palace to see Esther, and while he waited at the palace gate he listened to the conversation that went on about him. Usually it did not amount to much, but one day he heard two of the king's chamberlains plotting to kill the king. Mordecai told Esther of the plot, the men were executed, and the king saved. The record of the event was set down in the royal archives, but no one thought to give any reward to Mordecai.

That did not greatly trouble Mordecai, however, for he was very independent. Though he did homage to the king, he refused to bow down to the nobles, even to Haman, an Amalekite, who stood next to Xerxes in the kingdom.

Xerxes had ordered that all his subjects should bow before Haman as if he were king, and every one but Mordecai obeyed. He, a Jew, would not bend his knee to an Amalekite, the enemy of his nation. The refusal roused Haman's fierce anger, and to punish it, he determined to strike not only at Mordecai himself, but at his whole nation.

To be sure to find a lucky month for his plot Haman drew lots for it, and the lot fell on the month Adar, which answers to our March. Then Haman went to Xerxes, told him how worthless the Jews were as citizens, and how rich he might make himself with the wealth of that race. Xerxes, who did not know that Esther was a Jewess, gave Haman permission to exterminate all the Jews in the kingdom, and to confirm his promise put his own signet ring on Haman's finger.

Haman lost no time sending through the kingdom dispatches sealed with the king's signet which commanded the governors of the provinces on the thirteenth day of the month Adar to kill all the Jews under their rule and to seize the Jews' property.

A copy of this edict fell into Mordecai's hands and he brought it at once to Esther with the demand that she should beg the king to revoke the decree and save her people. Esther knew that if she went unbidden into the king's presence she was likely to incur his displeasure, and if he did not smile when he saw her and hold out to her his golden scepter, she would probably lose her life. But she risked that danger to save her nation.

Mordecai went away to pray for her, and Esther, putting on her royal apparel, walked tremblingly to the palace court where Ahasuerus sat on his throne. When he saw Esther, beautiful, graceful, hesitating as she waited for his approval, the sight pleased him, and he stretched out to her his gold scepter.

"What is thy request, Queen Esther?" Xerxes asked graciously. "It shall be given thee, even to the half of the kingdom."

"AS SOON AS THE KING SAW HER HE CHOSE HER AS HIS QUEEN"

"If it seem good to the king," Esther answered, "let the king and Haman come to a banquet that I have prepared for him, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said."

The king assented and sent word to Haman, who was very proud of the royal invitation. But as Haman went home that night, once more he passed Mordecai, who refused to recognize him, and Haman's pleasure was swallowed up in his anger. He told his wife of the honor the king had done him.

"Yet all this availeth me nothing," he ended, "so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

"Let a gallows be made fifty cubits high," Haman's wife advised, "and to-morrow speak unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon. Then go merrily in with the king to the queen's banquet."

Haman gave orders at once to have the gallows built, and then went to bed. Ahasuerus too had gone to bed, but he could not sleep, so he ordered one of his servants to read aloud to him from the chronicles of his reign. As the man read on hour after hour he came to the account of Mordecai's discovery of the plot against the king's life, and Xerxes realized suddenly that Mordecai had never been rewarded for his deed. Looking up, the king saw Haman, who had come early to the palace to ask for Mordecai's death. Xerxes ordered him to come in. Haman advanced, greatly pleased at so easy an admission, but before he had a chance to speak, Xerxes addressed him.

"What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" asked Xerxes.

"To whom would the king do more than to myself," thought Haman and answered, "For the man whom the king delighteth to honor, let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head. And let this apparel and the horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the streets of the city, and proclaim before him, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.'"

"Make haste then," cried the king, "and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate; let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken."

Black with anger, Haman obeyed. The man whom he had hoped to hang, he dressed in the king's own robe, set the king's crown on his head, and put him on the king's horse. Then at his bridle rein Haman led him through the city proclaiming as he went, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king

delighteth to honor." Then, his heart heavy with fear, he went to the queen's banquet.

Xerxes, when he and Haman had come into Esther's apartment, asked at once for the petition she had said she would make.

"If I have found favor in thy sight, O King," Esther said, "let my life and the life of my people be given me at my request; for we are sold to be destroyed."

"Who is he," exclaimed Xerxes, "who durst presume in his heart to do so?"

"The adversary is this wicked Haman," answered Esther.

The king, enraged at Haman's treachery, ordered his execution, and Haman was hanged on the high gallows he had built for Mordecai. Xerxes could not change the Persian decree against the Jews, but he sent posts through the land giving them permission to arm against their assailants; and when the thirteenth day of Adar arrived, the Jews, armed and ready, had little difficulty in repelling the attack against them. And so Queen Esther saved her people.

Pur means *lot,* and the Feast of Purim in the Jewish church still celebrates this saving of the Jews from the lot that Haman cast.

Chapter III—NEHEMIAH THE GOVERNOR

AFTER Zerubbabel had rebuilt the temple the new colony in Jerusalem went on in its regular life. There were no city walls to protect it from the attack of hostile tribes, but nevertheless the Jews, glad to be back in their sacred city, managed to exist. For a while they were eager over their reëstablishment, but as the years passed the people grew again careless in their living. The temple service became once more a thing of outside observance; the Jews, sometimes even the priests, intermarried with the heathen tribes about them, and the keen national spirit grew less. Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, lived at this time and did all in his power to rouse the colony at Jerusalem to its responsibilities.

All through the reign of Xerxes the Jews had been held in high esteem and Artaxerxes, the next king of Babylon, carried on his father's policy of kindness. He had for his cup-bearer a Jew named Nehemiah, and he held also in high esteem Ezra the scribe, who lived in Shushan. About sixty years after Zerubbabel had rebuilt the temple Artaxerxes allowed Ezra with a large following to go to Jerusalem to help the colony there and to take with them presents of gold and silver.

Ezra with his expedition reached Jerusalem in safety and delivered the treasure to the priests in the temple, where they all met to thank God for His care and protection. Then Ezra went to work to investigate the affairs of the city.

The news he heard caused him such sorrow that he rent his mantle. The people of Judah, even the priests, had married heathen women, and thus this earnest little band of Jews, led out of captivity to reëstablish the kingdom, were falling into the same error that had destroyed the national unity and religious spirit of their forefathers. All day Ezra sat speechless in his grief, while the people trembled at his silence. Then at the hour of the evening sacrifice he fell on his knees and asked God to forgive once more His fickle people.

When Ezra finished praying, all the congregation were in tears. Humbly they promised to put away their strange wives and so end the temptation to worship other gods. They drove out a priest named Manasseh, who had married a daughter of Sanballat, an Ammonite, and governor of Samaria. Manasseh went to Samaria to live, and built on Mount Gerizim a Samaritan temple.

In the meantime Nehemiah, the king's cup-bearer in Shushan, was very unhappy. He had had news from Jerusalem that although the temple was restored, it lay open to any attack of an enemy, for the walls of Jerusalem had not been rebuilt. So deeply did Nehemiah think about the matter and so earnestly did he pray to God for help, that finally Artaxerxes noticed that something was on the mind of his cup-bearer.

"Why is thy countenance sad?" Artaxerxes asked Nehemiah.

"Let the king live forever!" answered Nehemiah. "Why should not my countenance be sad when my city lieth waste and its gates are consumed by fire. If thy servant have found favor in thy sight, send me unto Jerusalem that I may build it."

Artaxerxes out of his love for Nehemiah made him governor of Jerusalem, and sent him away with gifts and with letters to the other governors of the provinces announcing Nehemiah's appointment.

Nehemiah made his journey safely, and when he reached Jerusalem presented his letters. Sanballat received the new governor very ungraciously, for he did not wish the walls of Jerusalem to be set up again.

Jerusalem was built on three hills, Moriah, Zion and Acra. The temple was on Mount Moriah on the east. North of the city rose the brook Kidron, which flowed first west and then south, thus bounding Jerusalem on two sides. Across the Kidron, outside the city, facing Mount Moriah, was the Mount of Olives. South of the city lay the valley of Hinnom, where Moloch had been worshiped and which Josiah had made an accursed place. The Fish Gate in the

old city walls had opened toward the Mount of Olives, and on the opposite side of Jerusalem the Joppa Gate had opened toward the west. The walls now were down, and their destruction had left such great piles of rubbish that the new governor had trouble in making their circuit.

But no hardship could discourage Nehemiah. He assembled the people, told them of his purpose and of Artaxerxes' promised help. Enthusiastically the whole congregation cried out, "Let us rise and build."

They prepared immediately for their great work. When Sanballat heard of it he came with his two friends, Tobiah, an Ammonite, and Gashmu, an Arabian, to protest.

"Will ye rebel against Persia?" they asked.

"The God of heaven will prosper us," Nehemiah answered shortly, "but ye have no portion in Jerusalem."

"What do these feeble Jews?" Sanballat asked mockingly of Tobiah. "Will they fortify themselves with the stones out of the heaps of rubbish which are burned?"

"What they build," Tobiah answered scornfully, "if even a fox brush against it, he shall break it down."

Nehemiah paid no attention to the gibes, but when he had divided his workers into a sufficient number of groups to encircle the city, he set each its task of clearing away the old and of building the new, until the wall began to rise steadily around Jerusalem; for the people had a mind to work. Sanballat, who saw the progress with dismay, planned with Tobiah and Gashmu an attack on the Jews while they were at work.

When news of the proposed assault reached the workers, they were ready in their fear to yield at once to Sanballat. Nehemiah had no such thought. Praying both night and day, he armed the builders, set guards, and carried the work ahead. Every one slept in his clothes, snatching such rest as he might, and worked with his sword by his side. When Sanballat saw the alertness and courage and steadiness of the Jews he gave up all thought of open attack.

Sanballat, who had not succeeded by ridicule nor violence, now tried treachery. Three times he sought to get Nehemiah to meet him on neutral ground to talk the matter over, and three times Nehemiah refused to leave his work to argue with his enemy. Then Sanballat went a step further and bribed Shemaiah, a Jewish prophet, to help him.

"Let us go together unto the house of God," Shemaiah proposed to Nehemiah, "and shut the doors of the temple against Sanballat, for in the night he will come to slay thee."

Then Nehemiah knew that Shemaiah was a false prophet. "Who is there," he answered, "that being innocent as I am would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. Should a man in my position flee?"

Sanballat, finding Nehemiah invulnerable against all his attacks, finally gave up his interference, and the work went on so diligently that within two months of the time of the beginning, the walls once more encircled Jerusalem. Then the temple was again cleansed, the courses of the priests ordered, singers appointed, and all Judah was called to the feast of rejoicing.

A wooden pulpit was built by one of the temple gates, and on the first morning of the feast Ezra the scribe stood in the pulpit reading the Law to the people and explaining it while they listened eagerly all the morning long. That preaching was the beginning of the church services that we hold now.

When he had finished, Ezra blessed the people. "Go your way," he said then. "Eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy unto our Lord. Neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

The people kept that feast joyously, and after it, the Feast of Tabernacles, and then Nehemiah was ready to dedicate the walls of Jerusalem. He divided all the men of the city into companies, with himself at the head of one body and Ezra of the other, and starting in opposite directions, with singers and the music of cymbals and trumpets, the two bands wound around the walls, until they met at the Sheep Gate of the temple. There the whole assembly stood while the priests offered sacrifices and the people shouted for joy over their accomplishment, for by their faithful, loving work Jerusalem had been walled and was once more holding high the torch of truth.

The Years between the Old and the New Testaments

The Maccabees

THE HISTORY TAKEN FROM

JOSEPHUS, THE HISTORIAN

AND

THE APOCRYPHA

Chapter I—THE MACCABEES

HE Old Testament closes with the book of the prophet Malachi, who lived in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, more than four hundred years before Christ. The New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus in the reign of Herod the Great. For the history of these intervening years we must go to the Jewish historian Josephus and to what we call the Apocrypha, which is a collection of Jewish writings that do not belong in the Bible. The Apocrypha contains a good many books, but the history of the times between the building of Zerubbabel's temple and the building of Herod's temple we find in the Book of Maccabees.

For one hundred and fifty years after Nehemiah had built the walls of Jerusalem the Jews knew peace under the Persian kings, untroubled by the growing power of Greece, where Pericles and Phidias, Socrates and Plato, Aristotle and Demosthenes, Æschylus and Sophicles were making Greece famous for all time. It was not until Philip of Macedon conquered Greece and, in dying, left his kingdom to his son Alexander, that Judah was touched by the events of the outside world.

In the year 333 B. C. Alexander the Great, the goat of Daniel's vision, defeated Persia, the ram, at the battle of Issus and trampled Persia's power into the dust. Thus as Persia had succeeded Babylon, Greece now succeeded Persia.

At Alexander's death his kingdom was divided between four of his generals. Macedonia and Greece went to one, and Thrace and Asia Minor to a second, while Persia and Syria came to Seleucis, and Egypt and Palestine to Ptolemy. Greek became the universal language.

Under the care of Ptolemy and his successors the Jews knew peace. Ptolemy Philadelphus studied the Hebrew Bible, and it was in his capital, Alexandria, that the famous translation was made of the Bible from Hebrew into Greek which we know as the Septuagint.

After some years of Greek rule, all cultivated Jews spoke Greek as well as Hebrew and Aramaic, and with the language came also Greek customs and philosophy. The Pharisees and Sadducees grew out of this contact with Greece; the

Pharisees founding themselves on the Greek Stoics, and the Sadducees on the Epicureans, believing with them that there was no future life.

There had sprung up too by this time Jewish churches called synagogues in all the larger towns, where on each Sabbath the Law and Prophets were read and explained to the people. While there was for the Jews no temple except the one at Jerusalem, there were many synagogues.

The rule of the Ptolemies over, Palestine was finally overthrown by Antiochus the Great of the house of Seleucis, ruler of Persia and Syria. The restless Jews changed masters gladly, but soon had reason to wish for the friendly rule of Egypt again. Antiochus Epiphanes, who succeeded Antiochus the Great, had for his one ambition the desire to make a world where every man should speak the Greek tongue, worship Greek gods, and think Greek thoughts. In order to accomplish this in Judea, Antiochus tried to stamp out the Hebrew religion. He ordered the Jews to eat pig's flesh; he painted pictures of idols in the Hebrew Bibles; he carried away the altar of incense and the golden candlestick from the Holy of Holies; and as the last act of desecration Antiochus offered a pig upon the altar of burnt offering, and then dedicated the temple to Jupiter. This time is called the "Abomination of Desolation."

Although some of the Jews obeyed Antiochus and, like the court party in Athaliah's day, were glad to ape foreign customs and culture, there were still true patriots left in the country. In Modin, a hilltop town between Jerusalem and Joppa, lived a priest, Mattathias Asmon, with five sons, Johannin, Simon, Judas, Eleazer and Jonathan. These Asmoneans at the head of all the brave men of Judah withdrew to the wilderness and defied Antiochus for many years. When Mattathias died, his sons in turn succeeded him as leaders. The most famous of them was Judas, called Maccab or the Hammer.

Judas Maccabeus, like the other Jewish heroes who relied on God for help, met over and over again in battle an army many times larger than his own and crushed it entirely. And for every victory the Jews praised God in the Psalms of the church.

"O give thanks unto the Lord," they sang, "for His mercy endureth forever."

Judas at last was able to recover Jerusalem and cleanse the temple. Knowing that alone the little band of Jews could not hold the city against Syria, Judas made an alliance with the growing power of Rome. It was a statesmanlike act, but it greatly offended the Pharisaic party, who from this time became the enemy of the Asmonean house. When Judas called for an army to oppose the advance of the Syrian host, only eight hundred men responded. At the head of his eight

hundred Judas Maccabeus met Syria's force of twenty thousand, and died defending his country.

Simon, Judas' elder brother, succeeded Judas, and was able with the help of Rome to hold Jerusalem against Persia. He was called Simon the Great by the Jews, and upon his death his son John Hyrcanus was declared king

The rule in Judea went down through the Asmonean family from father to son, until one of them had for his prime minister a clever Edomite named Antipater. Aristobulus, the last Asmonean king, was captured by Pompey and later killed by Crassus, who appointed as governor of Judea the son of Antipater the Edomite, also named Antipater.

Antipater's son was named Herod and we know him in history as Herod the Great. To endear him to the Jews, Herod married Mariamne, a princess of the Asmonean family, and to buy Rome's favor, he sent a large present to Mark Antony who, since his victory at Philippi, was ruler of the world. Antony made Herod ruler of Judea.

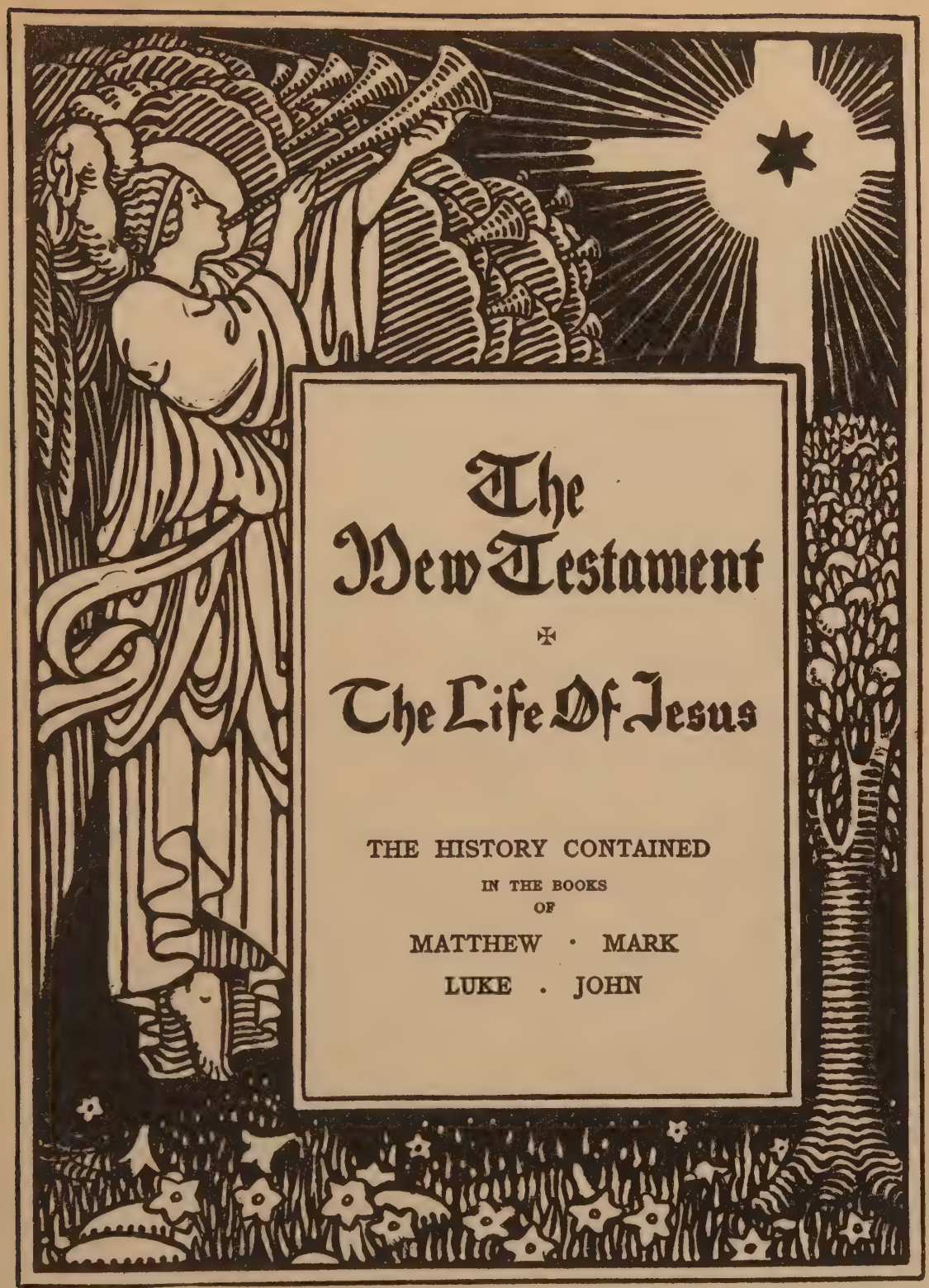
From this time we know the land of Canaan by the name of Palestine, with three chief provinces; Judea, where Judah had been; Samaria, in the region given to Manasseh and Ephraim; and Galilee, in the north. Herod's rule was over Judea and Samaria.

Though Herod was a clever and able man, as he grew older an evil spirit, like Saul's, seems to have fastened on him. He was so jealous of the Asmonean popularity that he killed his wife and even his two sons. To appease the Jews for this outrage, he beautified Jerusalem, erected a magnificent royal palace, and rebuilt the temple on Mount Moriah, making it more splendid than even in the time of Solomon.

The outer court of the temple, called the Court of the Gentiles, covering almost fourteen acres of ground, was surrounded by a wall with its chief gate on the east side. All around the inside of the wall ran cloisters, and the eastern cloister was called Solomon's Porch.

Inside the Court of the Gentiles was set the temple building within three other courts. The first to be entered from the outer court through the Beautiful Gate of Corinthian brass was the Court of the Women, where the treasury was kept. That court was separated from the Court of the Gentiles by a wall. A flight of fifteen steps led from the Court of the Women to the Court of Israel, and within that court another wall shut in the Court of the Priests, with the altar and laver. Within the Court of the Priests was set the temple, divided into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies as in Solomon's time, and with the porch across the front and its priestly rooms built along the sides. The temple was about

one hundred and fifty feet long. Its doors were covered with gold and adorned with a wonderful vine of wrought gold with clusters of grapes five or six feet high. Across the doorway of the Holy Place and of the Holy of Holies hung a beautiful curtain of Babylonish work in blue and scarlet and purple. In size and splendor the temple of Herod exceeded the temple of Solomon, but the great thing it lacked was the divine presence. Herod the Edomite knew nothing about the God of David.



The New Testament

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The Life Of Jesus

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE BOOKS

OF

MATTHEW · MARK

LUKE . JOHN

Chapter I—THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

I. THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

N the last years of Herod the Great there lived in a little town near Jerusalem a priest named Zacharias with his wife Elizabeth, who belonged to the line of Aaron. They had lived for many years together, and were good people, both of them, but like Abraham and Sarah they had never had any children.

Zacharias belonged to the course of Abia, the eighth of the twenty-four courses into which David had divided the priests. His duty was to burn incense morning and evening on the altar of incense in the Holy Place while the people prayed in the court outside. And while his course was serving in the temple Zacharias stayed in Jerusalem.

One day when Zacharias, alone as usual, was burning his sweet incense on the altar, he looked up and saw standing beside him an angel, and at once Zacharias was afraid.

"Fear not, Zacharias," the angel said, "thy prayer is heard. Thou shalt have a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness and many shall rejoice at his birth. And he shall go before God in the spirit and power of Eliiah to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

"Whereby shall I know this?" demanded Zacharias.

"I am Gabriel," the angel answered, "that stands in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."

Then the angel departed, and Zacharias, suddenly unable to speak, finished his duties and went out into the court, where the waiting people were wondering what was keeping the priest so much longer than usual. When they found that he could not speak to them, they were more astonished than ever.

"Zacharias hath seen a vision in the temple," they murmured to one another as they went their ways home.

Zacharias had to stay in Jerusalem to finish out his duties as priest in the course of Abia, but when his time was over he hurried back to his wife Elisabeth to tell her Gabriel's message. As he could not speak, he had to write the news for her.

Six months after this Gabriel came to Nazareth, where lived a cousin of Elisabeth named Mary, who was descended in direct line from King David. Through this maiden, pure and undefiled, was to be fulfilled all the words of the prophets who had foretold the Messiah.

When Mary saw the angel, like Zacharias she was troubled, but Gabriel at once comforted her.

"Fear not, Mary," he said, "for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt have a son and shall call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Mary caught suddenly a glimpse of all that Gabriel's words meant—that she was to be the mother of the Messiah. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word," she answered softly.

Filled with wonder and expectation and joy, Mary arose and made a hasty journey south to visit her cousin Elisabeth and tell her what a marvelous message had come to her.

"Blessed art thou among women!" cried Elisabeth. "Blessed is she that believeth; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

"My soul doth magnify the Lord," Mary sang, "and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaid; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever."

Mary stayed with Elisabeth for three months, and while she was there Elisabeth's son was born. When the day came for the baby to be presented in the temple, all the neighbors and friends thought that he would be called Zacharias after his father.

"Not so," answered Elisabeth. "He shall be called John."

"There is none of thy kindred that is called by that name," they answered. "Let us ask his father."

Zacharias on a writing tablet set down his answer. "His name is John."

" 'FEAR NOT, MARY,' SAID THE ANGEL GABRIEL, 'FOR THOU HAST FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD' "

As soon as he had written those words Zacharias' tongue was loosed again and he could speak. And all the people assembled marveled at it.

"What manner of child shall this be?" they asked one another, for they could not know then that the baby was to be called John the Baptist, and that he was to be the last prophet that we read about in the Bible. But Zacharias remembered that Gabriel had called this baby a second Elijah, and he knew that his son should be the forerunner of the Messiah. Filled with the glory of that thought, he too broke into inspired song.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," he sang, "for He hath visited and redeemed His people, as He spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant. And thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways."

II. THE BIRTH OF JESUS

AFTER the birth of John the Baptist Mary went back to her home in Nazareth. She had promised to marry a carpenter of Nazareth named Joseph, and to him alone she told what the angel Gabriel had said to her.

Away off in Chaldea, in the land where Daniel had studied with the wise men, there were three wise men to whom had appeared a vision of the coming Messiah. Perhaps the knowledge of a Saviour to the Jews had come down from age to age in Chaldea from the teachings of Daniel back in Nebuchadnezzar's time; at any rate, they knew that a Messiah was expected, and in their vision they had seen a star that should be their guide. Eagerly the three wise men, loading their camels with gifts, set out to follow the star across the plains, not caring how long or how far their journey would be if it brought them to the Christ.

Augustus Cæsar was still Emperor in Rome and Herod the Great, sick and gloomy and miserable, was still king of Judea, when Mary with Joseph left Nazareth to go to Judea to pay their tax money to the Emperor. Mary and Joseph were both descended from King David and so, instead of paying their taxes in Nazareth, they must pay them in David's city of Bethlehem.

Mary doubtless knew her Bible well, and as she journeyed down on her donkey over the hill country with Joseph she may have whispered to herself the words that Micah had uttered in the days of Hezekiah. "Thou Bethlehem, out of thee shall come forth unto me he that is to be ruler in Israel."

The road was full of travelers going to Judea to pay their taxes and many of them went faster than Mary and Joseph and came first to Bethlehem and Jeru-

salem. When Mary and Joseph reached Bethlehem every inch of the inn was taken, and the only place where they could find shelter was in the rough stable attached to the inn. And in this stable, whose only heat came from the huddling cattle, Jesus was born that night and laid in a manger for a cradle.

Augustus Cæsar in Rome did not know that in Bethlehem had been born one whose empire should be far greater than Rome. Herod the Great had not yet found out that the real king of the Jews had come at last. Caiaphas, the high priest, did not imagine that in Bethlehem was a high priest after the order of Melchizedek who should supplant him. The Pharisees and Sadducees in the Sanhedrin, and the scribes and lawyers who interpreted the law had no suspicion that now had come the Saviour of the world to preach the gospel of love. Perhaps the wise men, nearing Jerusalem, knew and traveled a little faster.

On the hills outside Bethlehem, however, where David had used to tend his sheep, there was a band of shepherds, clear-eyed and keen-eared enough to spiritual things to get the message. As they sat grouped together in the winter night talking perhaps of the time when the Christ should appear to the Jews, suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared and the glory of God shone over them.

As the shepherds, amazed and frightened, shrank together, the angel spoke.

"Fear not," he said, "for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

As the angel was still speaking a crowd of shining beings surrounded the shepherds singing praise to God.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," they sang, bearing to the world the first "gospel" or good tidings of the coming of the Messiah who should bring to the earth a law higher even than the law of Moses which had so far governed the Jews. Already the angels' song had gathered all the commandments into two—love and glory from man to God, love and good will from man to man.

The angels, when their song was finished, disappeared, and the startled shepherds came to their feet.

"Let us go now," they said, "even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

Quickly the shepherds came to Bethlehem and searched out the stable of the inn, and there in the manger they found the Christ-child, with Mary his mother watching him, her soul full of wonder and her eyes full of light. Reverently the

"'LET US GO NOW,' THEY SAID, 'EVEN UNTO BETHLEHEM, AND SEE THIS THING WHICH IS COME TO PASS'"

"THE WISE MEN CAME AT LAST TO JESUS, WITH THEIR GIFTS OF GOLD AND FRANKINCENSE ANDMYRRH, AND DROPPED ON THEIR KNEES BEFORE THE MESSIAH"

"AN ANGEL SPOKE TO JOSEPH AND TOLD HIM TO GO AT ONCE DOWN INTO EGYPT WITH HIS WIFEAND THE BABY, FOR HEROD WOULD DO HIS BEST TO KILL THIS NEW-BORN JESUS"

shepherds bent over the baby and told Mary of what the angels had said. Mary listened and laid each word away in her heart to ponder over.

Mary and Joseph and the child Jesus stayed in Bethlehem until the appointed time for Jesus to be taken to the temple as the little John had been, and then, with two doves as an offering, they went to Jerusalem.

There was in Jerusalem a very old prophet named Simeon and an old prophetess named Anna. Both of them were looking for the coming of the Messiah, and to Simeon had come a vision that before he died he should see the Saviour of Israel. When Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus came into the temple therefore, Simeon knew at once that Jesus had come to save the world. With a heart full of joy he took the baby in his arms and prayed to God.

"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," he said, "according to Thy word. For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

Then Anna came in and added her praise to God. And once more Mary gathered into her heart the words spoken about her son, and pondered them as she carried her baby back to Bethlehem.

Though the shepherds had told of their vision, and the people had seen Simeon in the temple with Jesus in his arms, the coming of the Messiah did not rouse the nation at large. The king and the courtiers, the Pharisees and Sadducees, the scribes and lawyers could not conceive of a king born in a stable; they were looking indeed for a saviour, but all they wanted to be saved from was Rome's oppression, and for this they looked for a king born in a palace. Not even yet in spite of Abraham and Moses and David and the prophets, had Israel learned that the kingdom which God had promised was the kingdom of heaven. Their ambition was not to be a holy nation, but merely to be a nation rich and powerful and prosperous.

It was not until the wise men reached Jerusalem that the news of Jesus' birth disturbed the city. The three travelers, not knowing that Jesus' cradle had been a manger, went straight to the palace to ask for him.

"Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" they asked. "For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

When Herod, so near the end of his miserable life, heard that a new claimant to the throne had appeared, he was much troubled. Immediately he called for the chief priests and for the scribes who knew the scriptures.

"Where shall the Messiah be born?" he asked.

"In Bethlehem of Judea," they answered; "for thus it is written by the

prophet, 'Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.' "

Herod sent then for the wise men. "In Bethlehem shall the Messiah be born," he said. "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him bring me word again that I may come and worship him also."

The wise men, still following the star, came at last to Jesus, and with their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, the "three kings of Orient" dropped on their knees before the Messiah they had come so far to seek.

When their visit was over, the wise men avoided Jerusalem and went home another way, for an angel had told them not to see Herod again. An angel too spoke to Joseph and told him not to return to Nazareth, but to go at once down into Egypt with his wife and the baby, for Herod would do his best to kill this new-born Jesus.

Herod, when he found that the wise men did not come back, fell into one of his furious rages and ordered that every baby in Bethlehem should be killed. But though he broke many mothers' hearts, he did not kill Jesus, for Joseph had already taken him to Egypt.

III. JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

WHEN Herod died soon after this, his son Archelaus was made king of Judea, Herod Antipas of Galilee, and Philip of a country beyond Jordan. The angel went again then to Joseph in Egypt and told him he might safely come home. So Joseph with his wife and the child Jesus went back to Nazareth and resumed his carpenter work. Jesus grew up in this simple, happy home in Nazareth with his brothers, James, Jude, Joseph and Simon and some little sisters whose names we do not know, while his cousin John lived in the priestly house near Jerusalem.

When Jesus was twelve years old he went with his parents to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. The road as they traveled through Galilee and Samaria was thronged with people who were going singly or in pairs or in groups; some on foot, some on donkeys, as they went to the great feast. Every one traveled as far as possible by day and camped at night. With so many camps and so many people there was much confusion and sometimes families became separated and were a long time finding one another.

Joseph and Mary and Jesus came safely to Jerusalem at last and stayed there through the week of the Passover. For the first time the boy Jesus saw the sacred city of his race and the temple which had held the presence of God and would

still have held it if His people had not covered their eyes with materiality so that they could not see it. To Jesus it was his Father's house.

When the feast was over Mary and Joseph started back to Galilee. Although they could not find Jesus on the first day's journey, they supposed that in the confusion he had gone with some of their friends and that they would find him at night when they camped. But when night came, and Joseph went from one group of kinsfolk to another and could not find the boy, he was alarmed. At early light he and Mary turned back to Jerusalem, imagining all evils that could have happened to him.

It took them a day to go back, and that night they did not find Jesus, but the next day, after an anxious search, they came at last to the temple and went in through Solomon's Porch to the Court of the Gentiles, which had various rooms built around it. In one of these rooms was gathered a body of learned Jews able to discuss the weightiest matters of their religion, and sitting on the floor in the midst of these deep thinkers was the boy Jesus, eager and alert, asking questions and listening with open heart to the answers, while every great man in the group was filled with amazement at the boy's knowledge and receptivity to truth.

"Son," Mary said gently, "why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

"How is it that ye sought me?" Jesus asked, hoping that at least his mother might understand. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

But even at twelve years old Jesus began to find out that he must live his life alone; that not even those nearest him could touch the depths and heights of his consciousness. Mary, much as she loved her son, could not understand, though she still kept in the secret places of her heart all his sayings and pondered them. With a farewell to the doctors Jesus left the temple and went back with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth.

And there he lived for many years, learning his trade like other Jewish boys, studying the scriptures, helping Joseph, obedient to Mary, happy with his brothers and sisters, each year growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

Chapter II—THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

I. THE FORERUNNER

HEN Zacharias' son John was thirty years old, the call came to him to leave the wilderness which he loved and begin on the east side of the Jordan the work to which he was called.

Tiberius had succeeded Octavius as emperor; Herod Antipas still ruled in Galilee, but a Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, was in Judea in the place of Archelaus. Caiaphas, a Sadducee, was high priest in connection with his father-in-law Annas.

As soon as John began to preach the country was astir. Not for many years had Israel seen a prophet, and now out of the desert came this man, clothed like Elijah, in a cloak of skin girt with a leather belt, uttering clear, cutting denunciation of sin and calling all to repentance. Was it Elijah come back? Or was it the Messiah? Or was it a new prophet? Curiously every one flocked down to the Jordan, where John was preaching, to see what sort of man he was.

John spared none of them; to high and low he uncovered their sins and declared that only righteousness could save man or nation.

John baptized in Jordan all those who were really repentant and sent them away to live better lives. But when they asked him if he were the Christ, he said no.

"There cometh one mightier than I after me," he answered, "the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

For six months John preached and baptized by Jordan, and then one day a young Jew came down to the river. The crowds around John did not see anything extraordinary in him, for they could not understand the exaltation and

peace and steadfastness that shone in his face. But John saw it and knew the Messiah.

Jesus listened to John's words and went with the others to be baptized. But John protested.

"I have need to be baptized of thee," he said, "and comest thou to me?"

"Suffer it to be so now," Jesus answered, and John baptized him.

As Jesus went up from the water the heavens opened and God's presence like a dove fell upon him, and both Jesus and John, who had ears to hear, heard the voice of God.

"This is my beloved son," it said, "in whom I am well pleased."

II. THE TEMPTATION

AND thus Jesus knew that his life work too was begun. To prepare for it he left the crowds on the Jordan's bank and went down alone into the wilderness. He was there forty days, so deeply in communion with God that he thought neither of sleeping nor eating. But when the time was over, being born of an earthly mother, he was both hungry and tired.

And then temptations came to him so strongly that they seemed an actual presence.

"If thou be the Son of God," said the devil, "command this stone that it may be made bread."

Jesus knew that the only real things are the spiritual and those he could never lack. "It is written." he answered, " 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' "

Baffled in that attempt, the devil showed him the temple, the house of God, and said, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence; for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.' " By quoting the Bible the devil thought to deceive Jesus.

But again Jesus knew so surely that his religion was of the spirit that he did not need any such material proof. "It is written," he answered again, " 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' "

Then for the third time the devil tried. Showing him all the material riches and power of the world spread before him he said, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine."

"Get thee behind me, Satan," Jesus exclaimed, "for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' "

And then the devil left him and angels came and ministered unto him, because against all the attacks of evil Jesus had not swerved from his certainty that God is Spirit and that man is made in His image and likeness. All the answers of Jesus had come from the Bible, from the great speech that Moses had made to the children of Israel. The Pharisees and Sadducees knew the words of that speech, but they did not know God.

Strengthened now for his ministry Jesus came out from the desert and started back to Jordan, where John was still preaching.

III. THE FIRST APOSTLES

DURING the forty days that Jesus had been in the wilderness John had gone on with his preaching and daily new disciples had flocked to him. He had made such a stir through the country that at last the priests had sent from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to inquire into his work.

"Who art thou?" they demanded.

"I am not the Christ," he answered.

"What then?" they asked. "Art thou Elijah?"

"I am not," he said.

"Who art thou then," they questioned again, "that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself?"

And John answered, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as said the prophet Isaiah."

"Why baptizest thou then," went on the priests, "if thou be not the Christ nor Elijah?"

"I baptize with water," John said, "but there standeth one among you whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's lachet I am not worthy to unloose."

Unable to make anything of his answers, the priests turned away. The next day Jesus came to Bethabara, and John, looking up, saw him.

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," he exclaimed. "This is he of whom I said, 'After me cometh a man who is preferred before me;' for he was before me."

The following day toward sunset John was standing with two of his followers, John the son of Zebedee and Andrew, son of Jonas, both fishermen, when he saw Jesus again, and once more he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

"FOR THE THIRD TIME THE DEVIL TRIED. SHOWING HIM ALL THE MATERIAL RICHES SPREAD BEFORE HIM HE SAID: 'IF THOU WILT WORSHIP ME, ALL SHALL BE THINE'"

A lamb without blemish had always been used by the Jews as a sacrifice to atone for sin, and immediately these two earnest men who had been listening to John knew that Jesus was the Messiah who had come to save the world from sin. At once they went to him, and Jesus, turning, saw them.

"What seek ye?" he asked.

"Master," they asked, "where dwellest thou?"

"Come and see," answered Jesus, and took them to the place where he lodged.

For the rest of the day the two men, Andrew and John, sat eagerly with Jesus listening to every word that fell from his lips and convinced that they had found the Christ.

So filled with joy were they that Andrew, knowing that his brother Simon was somewhere in the throng at Bethabara, could not rest until he had searched him out and told him what had happened.

"We have found the Christ," he cried eagerly, and led Simon to Jesus.

Jesus already loved Andrew and John and when he saw Simon he loved him too. "Thou are Simon, the son of Jona," he said. "Thou shalt be called Cephas."

Cephas meant in Syriac a stone, and in Greek Peter means a stone. When therefore Jesus gave Simon his new name of Cephas or Peter, he meant that Simon's strong nature would be like a rock to rest on. Peter, like his brother Andrew and John the son of Zebedee, became one of Jesus' followers.

Then still another man, Philip, joined the group which had gathered about Jesus, and as soon as he knew what Jesus had to teach he hurried out to find his friend Nathaniel, son of Tolmai of Cana of Galilee.

"We have found him," Philip said eagerly to Nathaniel, "of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" asked Nathaniel.

"Come and see," Philip answered, and Nathaniel, still unbelieving, went.

Jesus looked at Nathaniel with his clear, kind eyes. "Behold," he said, "an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile."

"When knowest thou me?" asked Nathaniel, amazed.

"Before that Philip called you," Jesus answered, "when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."

And then Nathaniel, true, religious Jew that he was, believed. "Master," he said reverently, "thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

"Because," Jesus asked, "I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these."

IV. THE WEDDING AT CANA

MARY, Jesus' mother, still lived in Nazareth with her children, though Joseph was probably dead. One of Mary's relatives, perhaps one of her daughters, was to be married to an inhabitant of Cana, and Mary was in charge of the wedding.

Jesus too was asked to the wedding, and with his five new friends journeyed up from Bethabara across Jordan to Cana in Galilee.

The feasting was going on when they arrived in Cana. They were welcomed gladly and given plenty to eat and for drink the light wine of the country which in those days every one drank instead of water. There had been a great deal of food and drink provided for the wedding, because in the East it is a terrible calamity to fall short in hospitality, but when these new guests had been served Mary saw that the wine had given out.

At once she sought her son. "They have no wine," she said.

"Woman," Jesus answered, using a word that was respectful and tender at the same time, "what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

And then, having thus gently told her that now he could know no more earthly relationships, but must be always about his Father's business, he turned to help her, with a smile doubtless that Mary understood, for she spoke to the waiting servants.

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," she said, and went away sure all would be right.

Jesus, who went about doing good, though he would not turn stones to bread for his own use, was ready to prove his Father's riches to help others. As he looked up he saw the six stone water-pots which were set by the doorway to hold water to be poured into basins for washing the dust from the feet of the guests. The pots were empty.

"Fill the water-pots with water," he said, and the servants filled them to the brim.

"Draw out now," Jesus said, "and bear unto the governor of the feast."

As they poured into a jug the water they had drawn, it came out wine before their astonished eyes. Awe-struck they carried it to the master of ceremonies.

He tasted it, tasted again, and then called the bridegroom. "Every man," he said, "at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

And Nathaniel, who saw the miracle, knew that indeed he was seeing that proof of the power of God which Jesus had promised.

Chapter III—THE YEAR THAT FOLLOWED THE FIRST PASSOVER

I. JESUS IN JUDEA

FROM Cana Jesus went to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, where Andrew and Peter lived, and after this Capernaum was Jesus' home. With his disciples Jesus went up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of the Passover. Perhaps he had not been to Jerusalem since he went for the first time at twelve years old.

Jesus had come to preach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven to a nation so steeped in materiality that even the national council and the high priest had forgotten the covenant that God had made with Noah and Abraham and Moses and David; had forgotten all that the prophets had declared about obedience being better than sacrifice; and cared now only for ritual and pomp. So far had they gone from what Moses taught that they had not even kept the temple sacred.

When Jesus and his disciples went reverently in under Solomon's Porch to the Court of the Gentiles, to enter the house built for God, they found that the temple was like a market place. Merchants had erected their booths in it; one man sold doves, another sold sheep, and another oxen, for the sacrifice, while near them sat the money-changers to furnish the correct money for those who wished to buy. Everywhere was the chaffering and bargaining and quarreling of men and the lowing of cattle. In the court of the temple, it was sacrilege to a true Jew.

There was never any one who knew as Jesus did what love means; there was never any one more pitiful of the sick and sad and sinning; but also, there was never any one more quick to rebuke hypocrisy and hardness of heart. Knotting a whip out of small cords, Jesus, without stopping to think of fear, drove all the animals out of the temple court, overturned the money-changers' tables, and gave a quick order to those who sold doves.

"Take these things hence," he said. "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

At once a crowd collected, eager to know whether or not Jesus was a prophet.

"What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" some one demanded.

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," he answered. He

was speaking of his own body, but every one thought he meant the temple structure.

"Forty and six years was this temple in building," the Jews said indignantly, "and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

Jesus said no more; he had cleansed the temple, but he could not make the priests understand. Nevertheless many of the Jews followed him because they thought he was a great teacher.

There was in Jerusalem a Pharisee named Nicodemus, more earnest than his fellows. When he saw what Jesus did in the temple he longed to talk to him. He was not brave enough to go to Jesus by day, however, but waited until after dark, and then finding where Jesus lodged he went secretly to the house.

"Master," he said, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God."

"Except a man be born again," Jesus said, "he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

But Nicodemus could not understand. "How can these things be?" he asked incredulously.

"Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things?" was Jesus' searching question. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

Nicodemus went away pondering Jesus' words; secretly after that he was his friend.

Jesus, starting home, went by way of Jordan, where John the Baptist was still preaching and baptizing. Some of John's disciples joined Jesus, and others who had not been baptized came now to be baptized by Andrew and Peter and the others.

"Rabbi," John's friends said to him,"he that was with thee beyond Jordan baptizeth and all men come to him."

"Ye yourselves bear me witness," John answered, "that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him.' He must increase, but I must decrease."

Not long after this Herod seized John the Baptist and put him in prison.

II. JESUS IN SAMARIA

BACK through Samaria went Jesus and his disciples, and one day about midday they came to the city of Samaria. Jesus sat down in the outskirts of the town by a well dug long years before by Jacob, and still called Jacob's well. While he waited there the disciples went on into the city to buy food.

Presently, in the fashion of the east, a woman came out of the city to draw water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. She looked at him, saw he was a Jew and wondered that he would ask a kindness at her hands, for the Jews still despised the mixed race of the Samaritans.

"How is it that thou being a Jew askest drink of me which am a woman of Samaria?" she asked.

"If thou knewest who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink,'" Jesus answered, "thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water."

"Sir," said the woman wonderingly, "thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Whence hast thou that living water?"

"Whosoever drinketh of this water," Jesus said, "shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

"Sir," said the woman, "give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

Patiently Jesus talked to her, showing her her own heart, while the woman listened in wonder.

"I perceive that thou art a prophet," she exclaimed. "Our fathers worshiped in this place, but ye say that in Jerusalem is the place to worship."

"The hour cometh and now is," Jesus answered, "when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

"I know that the Messiah is coming," the woman said, "which is called Christ. When he is come, he will tell us all things."

"I that speak unto thee am he," Jesus said.

Then the woman believed. When the disciples came back with the food they had brought she left her water pot and ran back to the city to her friends.

"Come," she cried, "and see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?"

The disciples, who had wondered why their master should talk to a Samaritan woman, were now urging him to eat the food they had brought.

"I have meat to eat that ye know not of," he said, and even these men who knew and trusted him as the Messiah could not understand.

"Hath any man brought him ought to eat?" they asked each other.

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me," Jesus answered.

III. JESUS IN GALILEE

AFTER the two days in Samaria Jesus went on up through the country and came once more into Galilee. On his way to Capernaum he stopped again at Cana, where he had been to the wedding. He was still talked about in the town, and when a nobleman of Capernaum heard he was in Cana he hastened to ask Jesus to heal his son, who was very ill.

"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe," Jesus said a little sadly.

"Sir," begged the nobleman, "come down ere my child die."

"Go thy way," answered Jesus, "thy son liveth."

In eager faith the man turned back to Capernaum, and as he journeyed two of his servants came to meet him.

"Thy son liveth," they cried.

"At what hour did he begin to amend?" asked the father.

"Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him," they answered, and the father knew that that was just the hour that Jesus had promised the healing.

Jesus too went back to Capernaum from Cana and so great a throng of people who had heard of his miracles followed him down to the shore of the Sea of Galilee that Jesus got into Peter's boat that was drawn up and asked Peter to pull out a little from the shore. Peter and Andrew, after fishing all night unsuccessfully with their partners, John and James, the sons of Zebedee, were now washing their nets, but at Jesus' call they left John and James and pushed their boat out from shore. From that pulpit Jesus preached to the multitude.

When he had finished speaking he said to Peter, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught."

"Master," Peter answered, "we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

So the boat went again into the sea, and when Andrew and Peter let down the net, it took in such a multitude of fishes that the net broke and they had to signal to John and James to come out to help them. There were so many fishes in the net that it loaded both boats to the gunwales, and the men were awestruck.

"Fear not," Jesus said to Peter, "from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

That was the definite call to service, not only for Peter and Andrew and John, but to James too. The four fishermen brought in their boats and disposed of the fishes. Then they left all and followed Jesus back to Capernaum, and from that time they stayed with him.

On the Sabbath day Jesus went with his disciples into the synagogue in

"THERE WERE SO MANY FISHES IN THE NET THAT IT LOADED BOTH BOATS TO THE GUNWALES"

Capernaum and as he preached every one listened in amazement, for he taught with authority and not in the manner of the scribes.

In the synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit who, when he heard Jesus preach of the power of God, cried out, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."

"Hold thy peace and come out of him," said Jesus, and the man was healed.

In utter astonishment after the service the people asked each other, "What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him."

Quietly Jesus and his disciples left the synagogue and went to Peter's house, while the fame of the healing of the insane man ran through the city.

In the house Jesus found Peter's wife's mother ill of a fever, but when he went to her with his confident, loving smile and, taking her hand, raised her up, at once the fever left her, and she went about her household tasks.

The news of this healing too spread through the city, and as the sun got down to the horizon and the Sabbath was over, every one who had a father or mother or child or brother or sister who was sick in any way brought him to Jesus, and he healed them all.

Early the next morning while the others still slept, Jesus rose and went out by himself into the country to a quiet place where he could pray, for always before and after a great work Jesus went alone to pray to his Father whose business he was about.

It was not long before his disciples sought him out. "All men seek thee," they told him.

"Let us go into the next town," Jesus answered. "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent."

So leaving Capernaum Jesus and his disciples went through Galilee preaching the gospel in the synagogues where before only the law had been preached, and healing the sick everywhere.

One day as they were walking through the country they met a leper. Lepers were so feared that they were not allowed to come near to others or salute them; when they saw any one coming they must call, "unclean! unclean!" as a warning to the approaching man, and wait until he had passed by. But this leper had heard of Jesus' wonderful works and believed that Jesus could heal even a disease called incurable. Filled with his faith he went near to Jesus and kneeled at his feet, and Jesus did not draw away, for he was not afraid of anything.

"Lord," cried the leper, "if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

"I will," answered Jesus with his quick, loving response. "Be thou clean."

At once the leprosy vanished and the sick man stood up well and strong.

"Tell no man," Jesus said, "but go and show thyself to the priest and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them."

But the leper, filled with joy, found it hard to keep silence, and soon through all Galilee it was known that here was a man who could heal even leprosy. A great multitude thronged to Jesus and followed him. He was so popular then, that if he had come to establish a material kingdom he would have had no difficulty in raising an army to support him.

But, as Paul tells us, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Jesus had come to save men from sin and to rouse them to righteousness and peace and joy in God. He never for an hour thought of founding an earthly kingdom; his life work was to bring down to earth the kingdom of heaven, that men might enter it and there finally fulfill man's covenant with God.

But however eager the people were to be healed, the scribes and Pharisees did not want to hear the kingdom of heaven preached, and every miracle that Jesus did in the power of God roused the antagonism of those who thought they were the true custodians of the Jewish religion. Among the enthusiastic crowds who followed Jesus there were even then scribes and Pharisees seeking to find something wrong in this new prophet whose teachings and deeds, unless they were stopped, would soon overthrow their authority.

After his circuit of Galilee Jesus came back to Capernaum, and no sooner was it known that he was in the house than the people gathered in such crowds that the later comers were not able to get near the door. Those who could hear listened eagerly while Jesus talked to them, but the Pharisees' faces grew darker every minute.

All the eastern houses were built around a court in that time, and as Jesus stood in the upper story speaking to the people below, there came four men carrying on a mattress a man who was paralyzed. They tried in vain to carry the sick man through the crowd to Jesus, and when they could not make a way they carried their burden up the outside staircase to the roof, opened the trap door and let the mattress and the paralytic down at Jesus' feet. The sick man did not speak, but Jesus looking at him saw the fear and misery in his eyes.

"Son," Jesus said gently, touching on the deeper matter first, "thy sins are forgiven thee."

Then the scribes and Pharisees, frowning, began to whisper together. "Who is this man that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

"Why reason ye in your hearts," Jesus answered, turning from the sick man to the Pharisees, "whether it is easier to say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Arise up and walk'? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin," and then he turned back to the paralytic, "I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy couch and go into thine house," he commanded.

The man who could not walk arose, rolled up his light mattress and went home with it, glorifying God at every step because his sin was gone and his sickness too.

Those who saw the miracle were filled with wonder and they too went home glorifying God and saying, "We never saw it on this fashion." But the Pharisees went away in displeasure. In their hard selfishness already they began to hate the Son of God.

Jesus went out to rest by the lake after the crowd left him, and as he went through the city he passed a tax gatherer, a publican. The Jews hated the tax gatherers as much as they hated the Samaritans, for the publicans collected taxes for Rome and the Jews did not want to remember that they were under tribute to Cæsar.

This publican's name was Matthew, and Jesus as he looked at him knew that he was ready to be a disciple. "Follow me," Jesus said.

Matthew gladly joined himself to the little band, making the seventh disciple; John, James, Peter, Andrew, Philip, Nathaniel and now Matthew. Matthew took them all home to dine.

This act too aroused the resentment of the Pharisees. No strict Jew would talk to a Samaritan woman or let a leper approach him or eat with a publican. Sneeringly they spoke to Jesus' disciples.

"How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" they asked.

Jesus heard and answered them. "They that are whole have no need of a physician," he said, "but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous; but to call sinners to repentance."

"Why do the disciples of John the Baptist and of the Pharisees fast," they asked again, "but thy disciples fast not?" for to the Pharisees it was much more important to keep a fast day than to heal a sick man. Moses in the Law had appointed one fast in the year, on the Day of Atonement, but the Pharisees had increased this to two a week, when they covered their heads with ashes and wore long faces but never thought of changing their hearts.

"Can the children of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?" Jesus asked, but his answer meant nothing to the Pharisees.

Chapter IV—THE YEAR THAT FOLLOWED THE SECOND PASSOVER

I. THE ENMITY OF THE PHARISEES

WHEN the spring brought again the time for the Passover Jesus and his disciples went once more to Jerusalem. Jesus' fame had reached Judea and men were watching for his appearing.

As Jesus on the Sabbath went up to the temple he passed the pool of Bethesda, lying close to the sheep market, and stopped a moment to look with pity at the sick folk who came from all over the country to be healed by the waters of the pool. The pool bubbled up at intervals, and each man was eager to be the first one to step in after the waters were stirred that he might get all the healing. Among those on the steps around the pool Jesus saw a man who had been sick thirty-eight years.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" he asked the man gently.

"Sir," answered the man, "I have no one when the water is troubled to put me into the pool, but while I am coming another steppeth down before me."

Perhaps the man hoped that the stranger would help him down into the pool, but the Son of God did not have to depend on any material means to make men whole. He spoke to this man as he had to the paralytic at Capernaum.

"Arise," he said simply, "take up thy bed and walk."

The man, who could not go even the few steps to the pool arose, picked up his mattress and started home. But on the way he met some of the Pharisees and when they saw he was carrying his bed they stopped him. According to their rendering of the Law the man was committing a great sin. One was allowed to carry on the Sabbath food of the size of a fig, or as much ink as would write two letters of the alphabet, but an extra pin on one's clothes was a sin to carry, and so big a thing as a mattress was a terrible offense.

"It is the Sabbath day," they said shortly. "It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed."

"He that made me whole," answered the man, "the same said unto me, 'Take up thy bed and walk.' "

"What man is that which said to thee, 'Take up thy bed and walk'?" they asked quickly, for to them that man was a greater sinner than the one who had been healed.

"I know not," answered the man, and went his way into the temple to thank God.

In the temple he met Jesus and asked his name. "Behold," Jesus said, "thou art made whole. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." But the man told the Pharisees that it was Jesus who had healed him.

Jesus therefore was brought before the council to be rebuked for working on the Sabbath day.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," Jesus answered.

"It is blasphemy," answered the Jews. "He maketh himself equal with God."

Jesus answered, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that Himself doeth; and He will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. I can of mine own self do nothing. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not."

Because Jesus was so popular with the people, the Pharisees dared not at that time lay hands on him, but they formed a purpose then from which they never wavered—to put him to death. Everywhere through Judea and Galilee the common people heard him gladly, and everywhere the Pharisees plotted against his life.

It was shortly after this healing that Jesus and his disciples on their way home from Jerusalem were passing through a barley field on the Sabbath day. As the disciples were hungry they picked a handful of barley-heads and rubbed out the grain and ate it. Any traveler was allowed to eat the grain as he passed through a vineyard, so if it had been a weekday no one would have remarked on the act, but as it was, the Pharisees were roused to frenzy. Was not this reaping and threshing and preparing food on the Sabbath, and was not work forbidden on the seventh day? Once more they rebuked Jesus for his disciples' act.

"Behold," they said, "why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?"

"Have ye never read what David did when he had need?" Jesus asked; "how he went into the house of God and did eat shew-bread. But if ye had known what this meaneth, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' ye would not have condemned the guiltless. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."

Not knowing how to answer him, the Pharisees once more let Jesus depart, and he went on to Galilee. But the Pharisees of Galilee also were waiting a chance to convict him.

Always on the Sabbath Jesus went to the synagogue, and very soon after his talk with the Pharisees he found in the synagogue a man with a withered hand. Perhaps the Pharisees had brought him there, for they were watching for Jesus and spoke to him as soon as he came in.

"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" they asked. If Jesus said that it was, they would proclaim at once that he was a breaker of the Law that made the Sabbath a day of rest.

But Jesus was never caught in any trap they set for him. "What man shall there be among you," he asked directly, "that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days."

Then he turned to the man with the withered hand. "Stretch forth thine hand," he said.

Though he had not used his arm for a long time, in simple faith the man obeyed; and he could lift it, for it was as strong as the other.

Roused to mad anger the Pharisees withdrew to plot again for Jesus' death. To strengthen themselves they went to the Herodians, who had been their enemies always, and formed with them an alliance in order to kill the Messiah that the prophets through all the ages had foretold should come to save the Jews from sin.

II. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

WHILE the Pharisees hastened to make friends with the Herodians, Jesus withdrew from the city and went through the country healing all who came to him in crowds from Idumea and Judea, from Phœnicia and from beyond the Jordan. And as he saw the throngs and knew more clearly all the time that his years on earth would not be many, he chose in his own mind twelve men whom he could instruct to preach the gospel and heal the sick when he was gone.

Halfway between Cana and Capernaum Jesus came to a hill called the Horns of Hattin. As the crowds were pressing around him he went up on the hillside to be able to speak more freely, and there he chose the twelve, who are known as the twelve apostles;—eleven of them faithful, and one a traitor. Already James and John, known as the "sons of thunder," were his disciples, and Simon Peter and

Andrew, sons of Jonas; Philip and his friend Nathaniel, whom we know as Bartholomew,—son of Tolmai,—and Matthew. To these now were added another James, whom we call James the less, and Jude, his brother; Thomas the doubter, Simon the zealot, and last of all, Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

When he had chosen the twelve, Jesus turned to those who were ready to listen and preached the most wonderful sermon ever uttered. We call it the Sermon on the Mount, and we learn by heart the beatitudes with which it begins. But in spite of learning and pondering them, we do not yet fully understand and practice them. When we do, God's kingdom will have come, and His will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus did not begin by blessing the man who has all riches and fame and power, but he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, and they that mourn, and the meek, and the merciful, and the peace-makers, and the pure in heart, and they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, and they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." No wonder the Pharisees could not understand, for what did they know of these things?

But Jesus knew that only in dependence on God lay might. "My Father is greater than I," he had said. "I can of mine own self do nothing." Jesus understood what meekness means; he knew that earthly mourning receives heavenly comfort; he was pure in heart, and could see God; he was merciful; he was always hungering and thirsting after righteousness; he was willing to go through any conflict to establish the peace that passeth all understanding; and he knew that those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness find the kingdom of heaven open for their refuge. Jesus preached only what he lived.

Then Jesus went on to explain love. The Ten Commandments may be gathered into two commandments of love; perfect love to God, and perfect love to man; but so far Moses' law had not been explained to mean that one must love his enemy. Jesus' gospel commanded, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

Next Jesus preached the kingdom of heaven. "Lay not up for yourselves," he said, "treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye

have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

"And when thou prayest," he added, "pray to thy Father which is in secret. After this manner pray ye," and then he gave them the Lord's Prayer, which after nineteen hundred years children and old men repeat to-day. It does not plead for riches and fame and power, but again for love and humility and righteousness and pureness of heart.

"Ye are the light of the world," Jesus cried to his disciples finally. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

For the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world had now shined, and that light Jesus' disciples through all time must reflect if they too would help open the doors of the kingdom of heaven to those who are seeking to enter.

III. THE WIDOW OF NAIN

FROM the Horns of Hattin Jesus went on to Capernaum, and as soon as he entered the city there came to him a call for help from a captain in the Roman army; he was called a centurion, because he commanded a hundred men.

"Lord," the centurion said to Jesus, "my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy and grievously tormented."

"I will come and heal him," Jesus answered.

"Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," the officer replied, "but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed."

"Verily, I say unto you," said Jesus, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee."

The centurion went his way and when he reached home the servant he loved was well.

The next day Jesus started out again from Capernaum to go through Galilee and came at last to Nain below Nazareth. As Jesus and his apostles approached the gates of the city, they stood aside to let pass by the funeral train of a young man, a widow's only son. Jesus had healed all manner of diseases, but he had not yet overcome what St. Paul calls our "last enemy," death. As he watched now the sad mother weeping beside the bier that carried her boy, Jesus' heart was touched with the compassion he always felt for the suffering. Going up to the mother he spoke to her.

"Weep not," he said gently and laid his hand on the bier. Those who were carrying it stood still. "Young man," Jesus said, "I say unto thee arise."

The dead man at the sound of Jesus' voice opened his eyes and then sat up, and Jesus gave him again into the arms of the joyful mother.

"Behold," said the multitude, "a great prophet has risen up among us. God hath visited His people."

IV. THE PHARISEE'S FEAST

HEROD had put John the Baptist into the fortress of Macherus in Perea, across Jordan, and here in lonely confinement month after month lived the man who had grown up in the open and who loved the wide stretch of the desert. As John brooded in silence, he wondered many times why, if Jesus were the Christ, all Palestine was not at his feet, and the kingdom of God firmly established on earth. Could John have been mistaken when he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God?"

To settle the doubts born in his prison cell, John chose two of his friends and sent them to Jesus. When they found him they asked John Baptist's question.

"John Baptist hath sent us unto thee," they said, "saying, 'Art thou he that should come or look we for another?' "

Without answering, Jesus turned to the multitudes who were waiting for his help and healed them. Then he turned to John's messengers.

"Go your way," he said, "and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

When John's messengers were gone Jesus turned to the multitude that surrounded him. "What went ye out into the wilderness for to see?" he asked. "A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appareled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

"But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.

"But whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, 'We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.' For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say, 'He hath a devil.' The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, 'Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.'

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you

rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

When Jesus had finished speaking, one of the Pharisees that stood by, a man named Simon, asked him to go home with him to dinner, and Jesus went. Why Simon asked him we do not know, for when they reached the house Simon did not offer to Jesus any civilities that hosts of that time offered their guests.

In those days people reclined at table, leaning on their elbows, with their faces toward the table and their feet toward the room. As Jesus was lying thus on his couch in Simon's house at dinner, through the open door there came in a woman who was a sinner. She went behind the couch where Jesus lay and kneeling down poured over his feet a costly ointment, weeping as she did it tears of joy and repentance.

Simon had seen the woman come in and shrank from her, as all Pharisees would. When he saw her bathe Jesus' feet, he was horrified.

"Simon," Jesus said, "I have something to say unto thee."

"Master, say on," Simon answered.

"There was a certain creditor," Jesus began, "which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most?"

"I suppose that he to whom he forgave most," Simon answered unwillingly.

"Thou hast rightly judged," Jesus said. "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Then Jesus turned to the woman. "Thy sins are forgiven," he said gently.

The woman went out full of joy to become one of Jesus' disciples, but the Pharisees who sat at Simon's table murmured among themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

V. STILLING THE STORM

AFTER his dinner with Simon, Jesus, followed by the throng of people who would not leave him, went down to the shore of the Lake of Galilee and getting into a boat once more made that a pulpit from which to preach to the congregation on land. This time he talked in parables.

The first was about the sower who dropped his seed into the ground for a crop.

Some seed fell into good ground and brought forth much grain, some fell among the weeds, which grew faster than the seeds, some fell on shallow soil and sprang up quickly but died almost as soon because it had no root, and some fell on rock and was eaten by birds.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," he ended.

Then he told them the story about the enemy that sowed weeds among the grain while the owner of the field slept; and the story of the mustard seed, which is the tiniest of seeds but which grows into a plant big enough to shelter the birds in its branches; and of the yeast which a woman hid in her dough till the bread was light; and of the merchant buying pearls who was willing to sell all his smaller pearls to buy the one that was priceless; and of the man who found such a treasure hid in a field that he sold all his possessions to buy the field.

And those that had ears to hear knew that Jesus was talking about the riches of the kingdom of heaven and the way to get them. Some thought they wanted it, but the desire was carried away by a passing thought, or it withered away because it had not really taken root, or evil thoughts sprang up and choked it. When it did take root and grow then, like the tiny mustard seed, it grew into a tree; or like the yeast in the bread, it went through the man's heart till it had lightened and sweetened it entirely. And then he was willing to give up everything to get the heavenly riches.

When the evening began to fall the people went back to their homes for supper and Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us pass over to the other side of the lake."

Just as they were, therefore, they set sail and laid their course across the lake. Tired with his long speaking, Jesus lay down in the stern and went to sleep. For awhile all was well, and then there arose one of the violent storms that come so unexpectedly on a land-locked lake surrounded by hills. The wind howled, the waves rose and finally poured into the ship. Still Jesus slept.

When they could no longer manage the boat, in terror the disciples awakened Jesus. "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" they cried.

Jesus awoke, his calm undisturbed by the wind and the billows.

"Peace, be still!" he said, and the waters too were suddenly calm. "Why are ye so fearful?" he asked his disciples lovingly. "How is it that ye have no faith?"

Even then the twelve who had seen Jesus manifest so many times the power of God were awestruck at the stilling of the storm. "What manner of man is this," they exclaimed, "that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

"'SHE HATH WASHED MY FEET WITH TEARS, AND WIPED THEM WITH THE HAIRS OF HER HEAD'"

VI. THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS

SAFELY then the little boat crossed the lake and under the cliffs on the other side Jesus landed. Tombs had been cut out of the cliffs, and as Jesus and his disciples climbed to the top, suddenly out of one of the empty tombs rushed two madmen, so strong that they broke every chain with which people tried to bind them. They had made themselves such a terror to the countryside with their cries and fierce attacks that no one dared pass that way.

When the men saw Jesus coming they ran to meet him, for they too had heard of his fame, and Jesus as he looked at the madmen commanded the evil spirits to come out of them.

"What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?" they cried. "Art thou come hither to torment us before our time? If thou cast us out, suffer us to go into that herd of swine."

There was a herd of pigs feeding on the top of the cliff, although no Jew would have anything to do with pigs. Suddenly as the evil spirits left the men, they seized the pigs and the whole herd dashed down the side of the cliff into the lake and were drowned. The herders ran away into the city of Gadara near by and told what had happened, and presently a great crowd came flocking out to the lakeside.

They found the madmen clothed and sane sitting with Jesus, but the pigs were gone, and the people of Gadara were afraid. Regardless that the madmen were healed, they begged Jesus to leave their country and not come back.

He did as they asked. When they went down to the ship, the men who had been healed wanted to follow. But Jesus sent them back to their homes to preach there the gospel of the kingdom of heaven on earth, and he and his disciples crossed the lake to the Galilee shore.

When Jesus reached Capernaum the crowd he had left was waiting for him, and as soon as he had landed one of the rulers of the synagogue of Capernaum came to him and humbly knelt before him.

"My little daughter lieth at the point of death," he exclaimed. "I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live."

At once Jesus went with him, the people thronging around and hindering his steps. Among them was a woman who had been sick twelve years and had spent all she had on doctors without getting any better. She had heard of Jesus and was sure that he was the Messiah.

"If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole," she said to herself, and without openly asking for help, came softly behind Jesus and touched his outer robe.

Jesus stopped and turned. "Who touched my clothes?" he asked.

"Thou seest the multitude thronging thee," the disciples answered a little impatiently, "and sayest thou, 'Who touched me?' "

But Jesus still looked about through the crowd with his loving eyes for the woman to declare herself. She, knowing that she was healed, came trembling and bowing before him and told him all the truth.

"Daughter," Jesus said to her, "thy faith hath made thee whole. Go in peace."

While he was speaking to the woman one of Jairus' servants came to find Jairus. "Thy daughter is dead," he said bluntly. "Why troublest thou the master any further?"

Jairus had only one daughter, this little twelve-year-old girl, whom he had asked Jesus to heal, and he loved her very dearly.

"Be not afraid," Jesus said as he saw the father's grief. "Only believe, and she shall be made whole."

Taking Peter with him and the brothers John and James, Jesus went into Jairus' house. There everything was tumult and wailing because the little girl had died.

"Why make ye this ado and weep?" Jesus asked. "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth."

No one believed him. They laughed him to scorn, but Jesus quietly went his way. With the three apostles and the father and mother of the child, Jesus went into the room where she was lying dead. He went to the bed and took her hand.

"Damsel," he said as he had spoken to the widow's son, "I say unto thee, arise."

The little girl opened her eyes, and got up, and walked. Jesus gave her back well and happy to her parents.

VII. IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH

AS Jesus went back through the streets of Capernaum to Peter's house the news of the child restored to life went before him. In the crowd following him were two blind men who before had perhaps not dared believe they could be healed. But now they cried continuously, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us."

Jesus did not stop by the way, and the men followed him into the house. There he spoke to them. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?"

"Yea, Lord," they answered simply.

"According to your faith be it unto you," Jesus answered with a light touch on the closed eyes.

Then sight came to them and brought such joy that in spite of Jesus' command that they should not talk about their healing, they spread it through the countryside, and still greater multitudes flocked around Jesus.

From Capernaum Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as he was there on the Sabbath, he went into the synagogue. The service of the synagogue consisted in prayer, the reading of the Law and the Prophets, and explaining them. The reading was usually done by the elders of the synagogue, but if a visitor wished to read he could show it by standing up, and then the elders would usually grant him the privilege.

When the prayer was over Jesus stood up, and he was asked to read the Prophets. The selection for the day was from Isaiah, a prophecy of the Messiah.

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me," Jesus read, "because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

When he had finished reading and given the roll to the officer, Jesus sat down to explain what he had read.

"Is not this the carpenter," men whispered to each other, "the son of Mary, the brother of Joseph and James and Jude and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us? Whence hath this man this wisdom, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?"

They listened curiously as Jesus began to explain what he had read, for they could not believe that the boy who had grown up in Nazareth could be indeed the Messiah.

"This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears," Jesus said. "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, 'Physician, heal thyself; whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.' Verily I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."

As the men of Nazareth listened, their curiosity turned to protest and their protest finally to a fierce anger. Should this carpenter's son presume to judge them, and to tell them that there was a better chance for the hated Gentiles to be

"HEROD WAS NOT BRAVE ENOUGH TO BREAK HIS RASH PROMISE, AND THE HEAD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS GIVEN TO SALOME"

saved than for them? In a tumult they rose up in their places and thrust Jesus out of the synagogue. They meant to carry him to the top of a steep hill of Nazareth and throw him over, but Jesus had much work to do before he should lay down his human life, and easily passing through their midst, he left Nazareth never to return.

It was after this that Jesus gathered his disciples together and sent them out to do their share of the work toward opening to men the doors of the kingdom of heaven.

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand," Jesus said. "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. Freely ye have received, freely give."

VIII. THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

HEROD had put John the Baptist in prison because John had told Herod it was wrong to marry his brother Philip's wife, Herodias. But Herod had married Herodias in spite of John's protest, and Herodias, who hated John for the rebuke, determined that he should die.

Herodias had a daughter, Salome, of whom Herod was very fond, and when Herod's birthday came Herodias sent the girl to amuse the king by her dancing. She danced well, and Herod was so much pleased that he made an extravagant promise.

"Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt," he said, "and I will give it thee, even unto the half of my kingdom."

Pleased, Salome ran away to her mother. "What shall I ask?" she said.

"Ask for the head of John the Baptist," Herodias answered grimly.

Back to Herod Salome went with her terrible request. "I will," she said, "that thou givest me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist."

Much as Herod regretted his rash promise, he was not brave enough to break it, and sent at once an executioner to behead John the Baptist in prison. His head was given to Salome, and she gave it to her mother.

John's friends did not revolt. They asked for his body, and buried it, and then went patiently on to live as John had taught them.

IX. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

THE twelve apostles returned to Capernaum from their circuit through the country to tell Jesus of all the things they had done and taught. Jesus knew too that John the Baptist had been killed.

"Come ye yourselves," Jesus said to them, "apart into a desert place and rest awhile," for the crowds were so great that there was no chance for rest or food or conversation.

So, taking a boat, Jesus and the twelve set sail privately across the lake. The many who watched them depart could not find boats, but nothing would keep them now away from Jesus. On foot they went around the northern shore of the lake, and so quickly did they make the journey that when Jesus landed the multitude was there before him.

In spite of his wish to be alone with his disciples, Jesus' heart, which knew no selfishness, was moved with compassion for the eager throng. All day he talked to them and healed the sick, and when evening came the people were still there, tired by that time and hungry, for they had come off in too great haste to bring food with them. The disciples began to be disturbed.

"This is a desert place," they said to Jesus, "and the day is now past. Send them away, that they may go into the country round about and into the villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat."

"They need not depart. Give ye them to eat," Jesus answered.

"Two hundred pennyworth of bread," Philip said, "is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."

"There is a lad here," Andrew ventured, "which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?"

"Bring them hither to me," Jesus said, "and make the men sit down by fifties in a company."

There were five thousand people in the throng, but under the direction of the apostles they separated themselves into orderly groups and sat down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and, as he held them, thanked God for His unfailing riches and care and love. Then, sure that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," he broke the five loaves and the two fishes into pieces and gave them to the disciples to pass to the multitude. The people watched with amazement as the barley bread and fishes which one boy had brought for his own lunch fed five thousand people.

When every one was satisfied Jesus spoke to his disciples. "Gather up the fragments, that nothing may be lost," he said, and the disciples, obeying him,

filled twelve baskets with the food the five thousand people had not been able to eat.

"This is of a truth," the wondering people exclaimed, "the Messiah that should come into the world."

In this moment Jesus reached the height of his popularity. The multitude would have been glad to carry Jesus in triumph to Jerusalem and proclaim him king of the Jews if he would have ruled over a material kingdom.

Jesus sent them away to their homes finally, and then told the twelve to cross the lake again to Capernaum, leaving him alone to pray to God for refreshing after the great work he had done.

On a mountain all alone, while the disciples set out across the lake, Jesus prayed. It was late, and a storm was rising. When the men in the boat drew out from the shelter of the shore they met it in all its force. Wrestling with the storm and with a head wind the ship made little progress. On his lonely mountain Jesus saw the trouble of his friends, and again forgot his own needs in supplying theirs. He had no boat, but to his spiritual knowledge a boat was not necessary, and, walking over the waves, he came to his disciples toiling in the ship.

They saw him coming and were afraid. In spite of his healing the sick and raising the dead and feeding the five thousand, they had not yet learned what the kingdom of heaven meant.

"It is a spirit," they cried out in fear.

"Be of good cheer," Jesus answered. "It is I. Be not afraid."

Impetuous Peter, always eager to venture a little further than he could understand, cried out to Jesus, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."

"Come," said Jesus, and Peter came over the side of the boat, but frightened by the waves he began to sink.

"Lord, save me," he cried.

Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him immediately and together they went into the boat. "O, thou of little faith," Jesus said lovingly, "wherefore didst thou doubt?"

The gale dropped when they entered the ship, and quickly and easily the boat gained the other shore.

"Of a truth thou art the Son of God," the twelve declared before they left the ship, and it seems strange that after all the proofs they had had, that they ever needed to put the fact into words.

The knowledge of the feeding of the five thousand had spread through Galilee, and as Jesus stepped ashore he met a new crowd of sick and sad and sinful

people, all waiting for his healing word. And Jesus healed all who came to him, even though he knew that they came more to be whole than to be holy.

"Ye seek me," he said sadly, "not because ye understand the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life which the Son of Man shall give unto you."

"What sign showest thou?" they asked. "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "

"Moses gave you not that bread from heaven," Jesus answered, "but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world."

"Lord, evermore give me this bread," they cried, thinking like the woman at Samaria that this would be an easy way to satisfaction.

"I am the bread of life," Jesus declared.

Even the disciples could not realize what Jesus was saying about eternal life. They knew that he had furnished material bread for five thousand people, but what did he mean by this spiritual bread? "This is a hard saying," they declared. "Who can understand it?"

"Doth this offend you?" Jesus asked. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

The multitude turned away. They were willing to follow Jesus for the loaves and fishes, but they did not care to be taught about things spiritual. From that time Jesus' following diminished.

"Will ye also go away?" Jesus asked the twelve.

"Lord, to whom shall we go?" asked the impetuous, loving Peter. "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

"Have I not chosen you twelve?" Jesus murmured.

Chapter V—THE YEAR THAT FOLLOWED THE THIRD PASSOVER

I. THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

NCE more Jesus and the twelve left Galilee. As they went through Phœnicia a woman followed them. "Have mercy, O Lord," she cried. "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Jesus said. "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs."

"Truth, Lord," she answered quickly, "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

"O woman," replied Jesus, "great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt; the devil is gone out of thy daughter."

When Jesus came back to Galilee the Pharisees asked for a sign from heaven. Jesus, knowing that their request was not genuine, refused, and crossed the lake with his disciples.

"Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," Jesus said.

"It is because we have taken no bread with us," they murmured.

"O ye of little faith," Jesus replied, "why reason ye among yourselves? Do ye not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake to you concerning bread, but that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees?"

Then they understood at last that it was not material bread that Jesus was warning them against, but of the lifeless doctrines of the Phariseees which had in them no leaven of truth.

II. THE TRANSFIGURATION

WHEN Jesus had come back to Galilee, in Bethsaida, he gave to a blind man sight, so that the man cried out that he saw men as trees, walking, and then Jesus went up to the town of Cæsarea Philippi, named for Tiberius Cæsar and Philip the Tetrarch. It was in Cæsarea Philippi that Jesus turned to his disciples with a sudden question.

"Whom do men say I am?" he demanded.

"Some," they answered, "say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

"But whom say ye that I am?" he asked.

Simon Peter answered. "Thou art the Christ," he exclaimed, "the son of the living God."

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona," Jesus answered, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

Peter, distressed by what Jesus said, took him away privately to rebuke him for thinking these things, for even Peter could not quite let go the idea of the material kingdom. But much as Jesus loved Peter, he would listen to no word that tried to turn him from his mission.

"Get thee behind me, Satan," he said, "for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

Some days later one evening Jesus took with him the three of his disciples whom he had taken with him to Jairus' house, Simon Peter with the brothers John and James, and went up on one of the nearby mountains to pray. Jesus' three friends were tired and very soon they fell asleep, leaving their master to pray alone on the dusky mountain side, until suddenly something wakened them. The darkness had disappeared and the mountain shone with a heavenly light. As the disciples looked in astonishment they saw that from Jesus came the shining, and looking again they saw that he was not alone, but that two other bright figures were talking to him of his death which should happen in Jerusalem, because the world would not listen to the gospel which he brought. Then the apostles knew that the two were Moses, who had given the Law, and Elijah, one of the greatest of the prophets. Together on the mountain were the Law, the prophets and the Messiah. The people who had forsaken the Law and turned a deaf ear to the prophets were ready now to kill the Messiah.

Wide awake, the three apostles held their breath, until the ardent Peter spoke.

"Master," he said, "it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

While he was speaking there shone a bright cloud, which was the presence of the Lord, as it used to appear before the tabernacle. It shut in Jesus and Moses and Elijah, and from it came God's voice, which said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

At the sound the three apostles fell on their faces in awe, but Jesus came and laid his hand on them. "Arise," he said, "be not afraid."

Wondering, they arose, to find Jesus alone, and without speaking they started down the mountain side, waiting until Jesus spoke.

"Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead," Jesus said.

"Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come before the resurrection?" they asked.

"Elijah is come already, and they knew him not," Jesus answered, "but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them," and the three knew that Jesus was speaking of John the Baptist.

There were not many who obeyed Jesus' command not to spread abroad what they had seen, but these three did obey. While Jesus lived they did not tell of his transfiguration, but none of the three could ever forget what they had seen and many years later Peter told about it in his second letter.

III. THE WISH TO BE GREAT

AS Jesus and Peter and John and James came down into the plain they found there the usual throng waiting for Jesus to heal them. There was one man in particular who had a son subject to fits of insanity. The disciples had tried to cure the boy in Jesus' absence but had failed.

When the man saw Jesus, he ran to him and knelt at his feet. "Lord," he cried, "have mercy on my son; for he is lunatic, and sore vexed; for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water; and I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him."

"O faithless generation!" Jesus exclaimed. "How long shall I be with you?" Then he turned to the father. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

"Lord," cried the unhappy father with tears in his eyes, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

"Thou deaf and dumb spirit," Jesus commanded, "I charge thee come out of him and enter no more into him."

With a cry the evil spirit left the boy and he lay motionless on the ground.

"He is dead," whispered the crowd.

But Jesus took the child's hand, and he arose, well and strong again, and his happy father took him home.

"Why could we not cast him out?" the disciples asked Jesus as they went back to Capernaum.

"Because of your unbelief," Jesus answered, "for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

In Capernaum the gatherer of taxes came to Peter and asked, "Doth not your master pay tribute?"

"Yes," answered Peter.

"What thinkest thou, Simon," Jesus asked, "of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children or of strangers?"

"Of strangers," Peter said.

"Then are the children free," Jesus replied. "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them for me and thee," for Jesus, while he rendered always unto God the things that were God's, rendered also unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's.

Then once more he told his disciples that he must leave them, and that the light he had brought to earth they must carry on, clear and undimmed. They must learn of him while he was still with them how to heal the sick and cast out sin and raise the dead, so that they should not fail as they had with the lunatic boy.

"The Son of Man," Jesus said, "shall be betrayed into the hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again."

But they could not understand all that Jesus meant. Indeed instead of trying to understand what he had to say they were quarreling among themselves as they walked as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Finally they referred the matter to Jesus and he answered their foolish question with his loving patience.

They had gone into the house, and Jesus picked up a little child and held it. "Verily, I say unto you," he said, "except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and the servant of all."

Thus rebuked, the disciples were silent, and Jesus went on, "Whoso-

ever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

IV. THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES

WISHING still further to spread the good tidings while he was among men, Jesus chose out of all his followers seventy who best understood his teachings and sent them out through the country two by two, as he had earlier sent the twelve, and gave the seventy the same instructions.

When they had made their circuit they returned with joy to Jesus.

"Lord," they said, "even the devils are subject to us through thy name."

"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," exclaimed Jesus, joyful too that his followers understood the work he had taught them to do. "Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

It was autumn now, time for the Feast of the Tabernacles to be held in Jerusalem, and with the twelve Jesus turned his face south toward the holy city.

Their way lay through Samaria, and when one Samaritan village refused to receive them, John and James, the sons of thunder, flared up in quick anger.

"Lord," they exclaimed, "wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elijah did?"

"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," Jesus answered. "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went on to another village.

As they were about to enter, ten lepers in a group saw him coming. They did not approach, but from their distance cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

"Go show thyselves to the priests," Jesus said, and that meant that they were cleansed.

Believing, the ten turned and went their way to the priest, and as they obeyed they were all healed. Then one of them stopped, so grateful that he must needs go back and thank the one who had healed him. The other nine lepers, content with being well, kept on.

The grateful leper, praising God as he ran, found Jesus again and fell at his feet in joyful thanks.

"Were there not ten cleansed?" Jesus asked. "But where are the nine?

There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger. Arise," he added to the Samaritan, "go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." So, cleansed not only of his leprosy but cured also of his sin, the leper went to mingle once more with men, and Jesus and his friends kept on to Jerusalem.

Every one was looking for Jesus in Jerusalem, for they thought he would come to the feast. "Where is he?" they asked. "He is a good man," some said. "Nay, but he deceiveth the people," others murmured, influenced by the scribes and the Pharisees.

Then when Jesus had come to Jerusalem and spoke in the temple, people flocked to hear.

"My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me," Jesus said simply. "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why do ye go about to kill me?"

"Thou hast a devil," answered his opponents contemptuously. "Who goeth about to kill thee?"

His enemies pressed around him ready to seize him, but those who believed in him cried, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"

The tumult reached the ears of the Pharisees and they sent temple servants to arrest Jesus, but though they found him, they listened to his teaching and went back to the Pharisees empty handed.

"Why have ye not brought him?" demanded the council angrily.

"Never man spake like this man," answered the guard.

"Are ye also deceived?" sneered the Pharisees. "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?"

And then out of the council one friendly voice spoke for Jesus, that of Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus by night. "Doth our law," he asked, "judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?"

"Art thou also of Galilee?" the council asked. "Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Angrily the council broke up and every man went to his own house.

V. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

JESUS did not sleep in Jerusalem but went each night probably to Bethany, where he had a friend, Lazarus, who lived with his sisters, Martha and Mary. Each morning Jesus went back to the temple.

As he sat in the temple court in the early morning, surrounded by eager

listeners, the scribes and Pharisees came to him, pushing a woman before them.

"Master," they said hypocritically, for they thought this time they would surely entrap him, "this woman is a sinner. She was taken in the very act. Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned. What sayest thou?"

They waited maliciously for his answer. If he said "stone her," he would lose his reputation for love and gentleness; if he said "let her go," the Pharisees could cry out that he had defied the law of Moses. Apparently not hearing them Jesus traced figures on the ground with his finger.

"Master," they cried impatiently, "what sayest thou?"

Suddenly he straightened and looked at them. "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone," he said, and began again to write on the ground. The Pharisees looked at each other, but no one was ready to declare himself sinless. The most influential in the group let go the woman and as quietly as possible stole away; another followed, and another, till the woman was left alone. Then Jesus again looked up.

"Woman," he said, "where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"

"No man, Lord," she answered.

"Neither do I condemn thee," Jesus said gently. "Go, and sin no more."

"I am the light of the world," Jesus said to those around him. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

"Who art thou?" demanded the Jews again.

"When ye have lifted up the Son of Man," Jesus answered, "then ye shall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

"We be Abraham's children," they said, "and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, 'Ye shall be made free'?"

"If ye were Abraham's children," replied Jesus, "ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham. I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

"Now we know that thou hast a devil," declared the Pharisees. "Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, 'If a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste death.' "

Furious the Pharisees stooped for stones to stone Jesus, but he passed safely through their midst, suffering no injury, and went to Bethany.

"'NEITHER DO I CONDEMN THEE,' JESUS SAID GENTLY. 'GO, AND SIN NO MORE'"

VI. THE MAN BORN BLIND

LAZARUS and Martha and Mary all loved Jesus and welcomed him eagerly, but the two sisters, unlike in character, showed their love in different ways. Martha bustled about bringing out every good thing the house afforded to offer her guest, while Mary thought that Jesus' words were too precious to miss by taking time away from him to serve him with material things. She stayed talking with Jesus, therefore, while Martha was cumbered with much serving.

Presently Martha in her self-pity could stand it no longer. "Lord," she burst out, "dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me."

Although Jesus knew that the spiritual bread Mary was seeking was far more important than the material bread Martha was serving, he had not rebuked Martha's way of showing her love. Now, however, when she tried to take from Mary what Mary had chosen, Jesus spoke.

"Martha, Martha," he said gently, "thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

From the Feast of Tabernacles to the Feast of Dedication—which commemorated the cleansing of the temple after its pollution by Antiochus Epiphanes—Jesus stayed in Judea, proving God's power to heal the sick and sinful in spite of the anger and malice of the Pharisees. One Sabbath day as Jesus and the twelve went to the temple they passed a beggar who had been blind from his birth.

"Master," asked the disciples, "who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents," Jesus answered, "but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

While he was speaking he had mixed clay on the ground and now he put it on the eyes of the blind man. "Go wash in the pool of Siloam," he said.

The man obeyed the command and came back seeing, to the great astonishment of all who had known him for many years as a blind beggar.

"Is not this he that sat and begged?" they exclaimed.

"This is he," some said.

"He is like him," others doubted.

"I am he," declared the man stoutly.

"How were thine eyes opened?" they asked curiously.

"A man that is called Jesus," he answered, "made clay and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash'; and I went and washed, and I received my sight."

"Where is he?" they demanded.

"I know not," he answered.

As they could get nothing more from the blind man, the crowd seized him and carried him before the council, where he was again closely questioned. The man could not understand all the clamor; he had been blind, and was healed; what more was there to say?

"He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see," he repeated patiently.

Then the Pharisees began to argue. "This man is not of God because he keepeth not the Sabbath day," said one party.

"How can a man that is a sinner, do such miracles?" asked the party to which Nicodemus belonged.

While they disputed some one turned to the blind man. "What sayest thou of him?" he asked.

"He is a prophet," he answered convinced.

But the Pharisees, still doubting, sent for the man's parents. "Is this your son who, ye say, was born blind? How then doth he now see?"

"We know that this is our son," they replied, "and that he was born blind. But by what means he now seeth, we do not know; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not; he is of age; ask him; he shall speak for himself."

Once more the council spoke to the blind man. "Give God the praise," they said, "for we know that this man Jesus is a sinner."

"Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not," declared the man. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

"What did he do to thee?" they questioned again. "How opened he thine eyes?"

"I have told you already," answered the man impatiently, "and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?"

"Thou art his disciple," they taunted him; "but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow we know not from whence he is."

"Why," cried the blind man, "herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened

the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

"Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" they said, and arrogantly they declared that he could no longer be called a member of the synagogue.

Jesus found the man later. "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" he asked him.

"Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him?" the man asked.

"It is he that talketh with you," Jesus said.

"Lord, I believe," the man cried, and fell at his feet.

"I am come into the world," Jesus said, "that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

"Are we blind also?" sneered a Pharisee who stood by.

"If ye were really blind," Jesus answered, "ye should have no sin; but now ye say, 'We see'; therefore your sin remaineth."

VII. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

WHEN the Feast of Dedication came Jesus was still in Bethany, going each day into Jerusalem to preach in the temple. As he saw the people gather about him, ignorant, unstable, his heart yearned over them again as sheep without a shepherd, and he tried to tell them of the true fold, the kingdom of heaven which was open to all.

"How long dost thou make us to doubt?" asked the Jews. "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

"I told you, and ye believed not," Jesus answered. "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. I and my Father are one."

In quick anger the Jews took up stones to stone him.

"Many good works have I showed you of my Father," Jesus said calmly, "for which of these works do ye stone me?"

"For a good work we stone thee not," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not," Jesus said, "but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works."

With a rush the crowd sought to seize him and carry him before the council, but Jesus escaped from them and passing through their midst left Solomon's Porch and went out of Jerusalem. He did not go back to Bethany, but crossed the Jordan

into Perea. There Martha and Mary sent him a hasty message about their brother Lazarus.

"Lord," they said, "behold he whom thou lovest is sick."

"This sickness is not unto death," Jesus said, "but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

For two days more therefore Jesus stayed in Perea before he said to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again."

"Master," they protested, "the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?"

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," Jesus answered, "but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

"Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well," replied the disciples, slow of comprehension.

"Lazarus is dead," Jesus said then plainly, "and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."

Sure that Jesus would be killed if he ventured back to Jerusalem, his disciples nevertheless made ready to follow him. "Let us also go," said Thomas, "that we may die with him."

When Jesus approached Bethany Lazarus had been dead four days and was now laid in his tomb, while the house was full of mourning friends. As Jesus drew near to the town Martha came to meet him.

"Lord," she said, "if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

"Thy brother shall rise again," Jesus answered her.

"I know," answered Martha, "that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

"I am the resurrection and the life," Jesus said, as before this he had called himself the bread of life, and the water of life, the door into the kingdom of heaven, and the shepherd of all straying sheep. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou this?"

"Yea, Lord," answered Martha; "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Then running ahead of Jesus, she found Mary in the house. "The master is come and calleth for thee," she said secretly.

Quickly Mary ran to the spot where Jesus was waiting, and all the mourners said one to another, "She goeth unto the grave to weep there."

When Mary reached Jesus she did just what Martha had done; she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died."

Though Jesus knew that Lazarus was indeed not dead, his compassion was roused for the sisters' suffering.

"Where have ye laid him?" he asked.

"Lord, come and see," answered the mourners who had followed Mary, and Jesus went with them, his eyes full of tears.

"Behold how he loved him," one whispered to another.

"But could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man should not have died?" was the answer.

Jesus approached the grave cut in the rock, knowing that before many months had passed he himself should be laid in such a tomb, for the accomplishment of his mission led him straight across the path of Pharisaical hate which would be satisfied with nothing but Jesus' death.

"Take ye away the stone," Jesus commanded.

"Lord, he hath been dead four days," objected Martha.

"Said I not unto thee," Jesus questioned, "that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

As they rolled the stone away from the cave's mouth Jesus prayed. "Father," he said, "I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." Then with a loud voice he cried, "Lazarus, come forth."

Just as he was, in his grave clothes, Lazarus arose and appeared to his astonished friends.

"Loose him, and let him go," Jesus said.

Joyfully Mary and Martha embraced their brother and led him back to the house. And all the mourners marveled. Some became followers of Jesus, but some stole away to the Sanhedrin and told the Pharisees what Jesus had done.

"What can we do?" the council pondered. "This man doeth many miracles, and we fear to rouse his followers. But if we let him alone, and all men believe on him, the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

"Ye know nothing at all," answered Caiaphas the high priest, "nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

And from that time the chief priests and elders sought anxiously for a means to put Jesus to death.

THE PRODIGAL SON WAS SENT INTO THE FIELD TO FEED THE SWINE

VIII. JESUS IN PEREA

JESUS did not remain in Bethany, but once more with his disciples crossed the Jordan and stayed in Perea until the time for the fourth Passover. Great multitudes followed him there and he healed their sick. Among them was a woman who had been bent and stiff for eighteen years and could not straighten herself.

"Woman," Jesus said to her, "thou art loosed from thine infirmity." As he laid his gentle hand on her, she was straight, and stood up glorifying God.

But it was on the Sabbath day that she was healed, and when the ruler of the synagogue of the city heard of it, he was very indignant.

"There are six days in which men ought to work," he declared. "In them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

"Hypocrite," Jesus answered, "doth not each one of you on the Sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

It was in these weeks before his last Passover that Jesus told many of the parables that we know so well; the story of the man who took for himself the chief place at a feast; of the lost sheep; of the lost piece of silver; of the prodigal son; of the unjust steward; of the rich man and Lazarus; of the importunate widow; and of the Pharisee and publican. Jesus had a great truth to preach but he did it always in the simplest way, and those parables preach to us now, as then, the same humility and trust in God that they preached to the crowds who followed Jesus through Palestine nineteen hundred years ago.

"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," Jesus said, "neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you."

As Jesus went on through Perea, which was under Herod's jurisdiction, some one came to him with a warning. "Get thee out and depart hence," he said, "for Herod will kill thee."

"Go ye," Jesus answered, "and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

And then filled with love for Jerusalem and compassion on its blind people, he added, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me,

until the time come when ye shall say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' "

IX. THE REQUEST OF JAMES AND JOHN

IT was getting time for the Passover, and once more Jesus turned his face toward Judea. As he went through Perea there came to him mothers bringing their little children that Jesus might bless them. The disciples, thinking that Jesus was too busy to speak to children, told their mothers to take them away.

"Suffer the little children to come unto me," Jesus said, "and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God," and taking them in his arms, Jesus blessed them.

As he went on toward Judea, after blessing the children, Jesus was stopped again. This time a young man came in great haste, with a troubled conscience evidently, and knelt at Jesus' feet.

"Good master," he asked, "what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

"Why callest thou me good?" Jesus said. "There is none good but one, that is God. Thou knowest the Commandments."

"Master, all these have I observed from my youth," replied the young man.

Jesus looked at him and loved him, for he was in earnest, but he was very rich and the material things seemed to him of great importance. Jesus saw that his riches were his trouble.

"One thing thou lackest," Jesus said. "Go thy way, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me."

That was more than the young man was willing to do then; the way looked too hard, and sorrowfully he went away.

"Children," Jesus said sadly, "how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

"Who then can be saved?" some one asked—perhaps Judas, who loved money.

"With men it is impossible," Jesus said, "but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

"Lo, we have left all and followed thee," Peter said.

"Every one," Jesus said to him, "that hath forsaken houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and

shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again."

The apostles talked together about what Jesus had said, and then James and John, who had been with Jesus in all his deepest experiences, urged by their mother, came to him with a request which showed how little they understood yet what the kingdom of heaven meant, though John did learn afterward more about it than any of the others.

"Master," they said, "we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire."

"What would ye that I should do for you?" Jesus asked.

"Grant unto us," they answered, "that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory."

"Ye know not what ye ask," Jesus told them in sorrow, foreseeing all that was before him. "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

"We can," they replied.

Earnestly Jesus looked at them. "Ye shall indeed," he said, "drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized. But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared."

Then the other ten heard what James and John had asked and were very indignant. Jesus again took the occasion to show what brotherly love must mean to them.

"Whosoever will be great among you," he told them, "shall be your minister. For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

X. JESUS AT JERICHO

AS the Passover approached, men in Jerusalem were wondering whether Jesus would dare come up again to the city to place himself in the power of the Pharisees, who were now determined that he should not escape them.

"What think ye?" they asked each other. "Will he come to the feast?"

Jesus was coming, although he knew that it was his last journey. He crossed the Jordan near Jericho and came up through that city on his way to Jerusalem.

As he approached Jericho a blind man, Bar-timæus—which means son of Timæus—who sat begging by the roadside, heard the sound of the great multitude that thronged after Jesus along the highway.

"What meaneth the noise?" he asked.

"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," some one told him.

Bar-timæus had heard of Jesus but he had never hoped to see him. Now that his chance had come, he cried aloud, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

"Hold thy peace," commanded those who stood near.

"Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," he cried the louder.

Jesus heard the cry for help and stood still. "Bring him unto me," he said, and when Bar-timæus had come, Jesus asked, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?"

"Lord, that I may receive my sight," pleaded the blind man.

"Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee," said Jesus, and Bar-timæus, seeing, followed Jesus into Jericho, giving glory to God.

The news of the healing of the blind beggar ran ahead of Jesus into the city, and when he entered Jericho the streets were thronged with the crowds eager to see the man who had healed Bar-timæus. So great was the multitude that one man, Zacchæus, a publican, who was short of stature, knew that his sight would be entirely cut off by other people's heads and, determined to see the great teacher, he climbed into one of the sycamore trees that shaded the street where Jesus passed.

Jesus walked under the very tree where Zacchæus was and looked up, with his loving smile no doubt.

"Zacchæus," he said, "make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house."

The little tax-gatherer, made happy by being called by name, came down quickly from his tree and led Jesus and his apostles to his home. As they went through the crowd the friends of the Pharisees sneered, "He is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner."

Most of the tax-gatherers were dishonest, for their salaries were so small that they squeezed out of the Jews a little more than Rome demanded and kept that for themselves. Zacchæus had been probably selfish and overbearing as a tax-collector, but his first sight of Jesus had made him a good man.

"Lord," he said, "behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

"This day is salvation come to this house," Jesus answered, and went on to tell the parable of the nobleman who went away leaving a talent to each of his servants that they might use the capital in his absence to make more money. When the nobleman returned, the first servant had increased his sum to ten talents, the second had gained five talents, and so on till the master came to the last servant, who had wrapped his talent in a napkin and buried it in the earth. Then the nobleman took

away that talent and gave it to the man who had been diligent enough to turn his one talent into ten.

"Unto every one that hath shall be given," Jesus ended, "and from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath."

And perhaps the apostles understood that Jesus meant by the parable what he had said before on the Horns of Hattin. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." God had left His talents with the priests and scribes who had buried them in the ground, while the publicans and sinners were earning the "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Chapter VI—THE WEEK OF THE FOURTH PASSOVER

I. SUNDAY

FROM the meal with Zacchæus at Jericho Jesus and the twelve came down over the Mount of Olives and stopped outside the village of Bethpage.

"Go into the village over against you," he said to his disciples, "and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him and bring him. And if any man say unto you, 'Why do ye this?' say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither."

The disciples went to Bethpage and found the colt tied. As they went back leading the colt and its mother a throng of people followed them. When they reached Jesus one of the disciples threw his robe on the colt for a saddle and set Jesus on it. Then they started toward Jerusalem, the excited multitude running ahead of them, and others cutting fronds from the palm trees and scattering them in his path.

"Hosanna!" they cried. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

But among the joyous, enthusiastic throng were a few Pharisees. "Master," they said, "rebuke thy disciples."

"I tell you," Jesus answered them, "if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

Then Jesus came into the city he loved and yearned over, and once more tears filled his eyes as he realized with what hardness it was refusing offered salvation. The very voices which were on this Palm Sunday shouting "Hosanna!" before the week was out would be crying, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

"If thou hadst known, Jerusalem, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now are they hid from thine eyes," he exclaimed.

As the procession went on through the streets to the temple the sound of the Hosannas drew all the people out of their houses, asking, "Who is this?"

"This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee," some one answered, and new throngs followed him as he dismounted and went into the temple.

He did not stay long in the temple. Evening was drawing on, and with the twelve Jesus went out of the eastern gate of the city and turned his steps up the slope of the Mount of Olives to Bethany where Lazarus and Mary and Martha were waiting to welcome him.

II. MONDAY

JESUS stayed the night in Bethany and on Monday morning set out with his disciples again for Jerusalem.

When Jesus reached the temple and went into the court, he found it filled with the traders and money-changers that he had driven out three years before. Again the sheep and cattle were crying and the sellers of doves shouting their wares and the money-changers clinking their coins. Almost the first act of Jesus' ministry had been the cleansing of the temple; now again, as almost the last act of his ministry, he overturned the tables and drove out the merchants, while the children who were in the temple cried aloud, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

This new excitement roused the priests and Pharisees to anger at the homage Jesus was receiving.

"Hearest thou what these children say?" they cried to Jesus.

"Yes," he answered. "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

Then Jesus turned away from them, left the temple, and went once more back to Bethany for a night of rest and peace.

III. TUESDAY

AFTER a night's rest at Bethany, Jesus on Tuesday morning went back to Jerusalem, where the Pharisees were waiting in the temple to call him to account for his act of the day before in cleansing the temple.

"By what authority doest thou these things?" they demanded, sure that his answer would bring him into trouble.

"I will also ask you one thing," Jesus said calmly, "which if ye tell me, I will in likewise tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven, or of men?"

The Pharisees, embarrassed, took counsel together. "If we shall say from heaven," they reasoned, "he will say unto us, 'Why did ye not then believe?' But if we shall say, of men; we fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet."

"We cannot tell about John the Baptist," they answered weakly at last.

"Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things," Jesus replied, and the listening crowds who were beginning to fill Jerusalem for the Passover felt that the Pharisees had had much the worst of the argument.

"A certain rich man had two sons," Jesus said to the Pharisees, "and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he repented and went. And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' and went not. Which of them did the will of his father?"

"The first," answered the Pharisees unwillingly.

"Verily I say unto you," Jesus answered, "the publicans and sinners go into the kingdom of God before you. John came unto you in the way of righteousness and ye believed him not, but the publicans and sinners believed him. Did ye never read in the scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?' Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

With growing anger the Pharisees had listened, but when Jesus spoke his last words they could no longer contain themselves. Starting up, they would have arrested him, if the people crowding around had not prevented it. Furious at their inability to arrest Jesus or to entangle him in his talk, the Pharisees went away to make one more effort with the help of the Herodians to catch Jesus in something for which they might really convict him.

The Herodians came back to Jesus with some friends of the Pharisees. "Master," they said, outwardly courteous and plausible, "we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for

thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not?"

"Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites," Jesus answered, seeing at once that they were trying to make him get into trouble with Rome or else by upholding Cæsar to make the Jewish people condemn him. "Show me the tribute money."

They brought him a coin stamped with the head of Tiberius Cæsar, the emperor.

"Whose is this image?" he asked.

"Cæsar's," they replied.

Jesus handed them back the coin. "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," Jesus said, and added, "and unto God the things that are God's."

Impressed and silenced the Herodians withdrew to give place to the Sadducees who believed in no future life. The Sadducees were enemies of the Pharisees, though they sat together in the Jewish council of the Sanhedrin, but now they were uniting with the Pharisees in the attempt to entrap Jesus.

"Master," they also began smoothly, and went on with a long story about a woman who had lost her husband and married his brother, and when the man died, married another brother, and then another, until she had married in turn seven brothers. "Therefore," asked the Sad ducees, "in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?"

Eagerly they listened to see if Jesus would say something that could be interpreted as against the Jewish law, but again they were foiled.

"Ye do err," Jesus said, "not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God, for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage."

Crestfallen, the Sadducees went back to the Pharisees to confess that they too had failed.

Then Jesus turned to those who stood around him. "The scribes and Pharisees," he said, "sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do ye not after their works; for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

Turning from the furious Pharisees, Jesus went into the Court of the Women, where the treasury stood, into which people, rich and poor, dropped their church offerings as they passed. Jesus watched them until a poor widow brought a farthing and dropped it into the box.

"Verily I say unto you," Jesus said to his disciples, "that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast

in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

"The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."

In answer came the voice of God, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

"An angel spake to him," some one said.

"It thundered," said others, for they were not used to the voice of God.

"This voice," Jesus said, "came not because of me, but for your sakes. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak."

That was Jesus' last great public appeal. He had come to his own, and his own received him not. Sadly he left the temple and set out for Bethany.

"Master," spoke his disciples as they went through the city, "what manner of stones those are, and what buildings! How they are adorned!"

"Seest thou these great buildings?" Jesus asked. "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

This material Jerusalem had had its day; soon Rome would overthrow it, and it would be no more. The new Jerusalem now, the perfect creation of God, the kingdom of heaven, must be what men should love and strive for.

Silent the disciples went on out of the city gates and up the Mount of Olives until, weary with the long, fatiguing day, Jesus sat down and looked back at Jerusalem.

"Tell us," the disciples asked, "when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming?" for after to-day's tumult the twelve, despondently ready to believe now in Jesus' death, were looking already for his second coming.

Jesus told them of all the misery and suffering that should come to Jerusalem before it fell, and then answered the second question.

"If any man shall say unto you," he said, 'Lo, here is Christ, or there,' believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. But of that hour and day knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you asleep. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

"THE FIVE WISE VIRGINS HAD FILLED THEIR LAMPS WITH OIL, BUT THE FIVE FOOLISH VIRGINS STUMBLED IN THE DARK UNTIL THE DOORS WERE CLOSED AND THEY WERE SHUT OUTSIDE"

Then, as they still sat on the mountain, Jesus told to his disciples more of his wonderful parables.

He told them about the ten virgins—five of whom were wise and five foolish—who went out to meet the bridegroom on the night of the wedding feast. He was late in coming and while they waited for him the virgins slept.

Then came the sudden cry: "Behold the bridegroom cometh. Go ye out and meet him!"

The five wise virgins, who had filled their lamps with oil before they slept, rose at once and went in to the wedding feast. But the five foolish virgins, who had never thought to see whether their lamps were full or empty, found they could get no light and stumbled in the dark until the doors were closed and they were shut outside.

"Watch, therefore," Jesus said again, "for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."

The last parable that Jesus told on the Mount of Olives was about the judgment of men's deeds. The nations were divided before the Lord, like sheep and goats; the goats he rebuked but the sheep he commended for their good deeds to him. In surprise they asked when they had fed the Lord or given him drink or food or shelter.

"Inasmuch," Jesus said, ending the parable in the words we all know so well, "as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

IV. WEDNESDAY

EARLY on Wednesday morning the people flocked to the temple to seek out the great teacher they had listened to the day before. The Sanhedrin too were plotting how they might seize Jesus without stirring up a tumult that would discredit them with Rome. For Rome was very vigilant in Passover week, when the city was filled with restless Jews from all over Palestine. The Roman guard was doubled in the tower of Antonia that overlooked the temple court, and the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, came up from Cæsarea to the palace in Jerusalem to be on hand to quell the disturbances that were almost sure to arise.

The Jewish council did not want to arouse Pilate's anger, and still they meant to seize Jesus while he was in Jerusalem under their hand. All day they looked for him, but he did not come. They separated finally, disappointed, but still determined to find a way to kill Jesus.

"We will not take him openly on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people," they concluded. "We must find some secret way to lay hold of him."

Jesus spent Wednesday in Bethany with his disciples. It was a solemn day for them, for the fact of Jesus' approaching death was finally impressing itself on their understanding. To the eleven Galilean disciples it brought only a deep sorrow; to the one Judean, Judas Iscariot, there came too a great dissatisfaction.

Judas had doubtless become a disciple of Jesus in good faith, but the seed of truth in his heart had fallen among the thorns of selfishness and greed which, springing up, had choked the good seed. He carried the common purse which paid for the simple needs of Jesus and the twelve, and lately he had been stealing from it. He had been growing impatient too at Jesus' attitude. Why, he thought, did not so great a prophet unite with the high priest and the Sanhedrin to rouse the nation against Rome, instead of setting at defiance the rulers of the Jews?

Since Jesus' open denunciation of the Pharisees in the temple all the disciples knew that there could be no reconciliation between them and their master. Any one who was the friend of Jesus was the enemy of the high priest and the Sanhedrin, and the Herodians and the scribes and the lawyers; of every one whom the Jews had been brought up to obey. All that long Wednesday Judas brooded over the thought.

Sometime on Wednesday Jesus was asked to dine at the house of a man called Simon, whom he had healed of leprosy. All the disciples were invited too; and Martha and Mary and Lazarus were there.

It was the custom in the East when one wished to honor a guest to pour on his head costly perfume. The most precious was made from spikenard and put into alabaster boxes. At the dinner Mary, coming to where Jesus lay, poured the spikenard over his head and feet and, as the other woman had done, dried them with her hair.

As the perfume floated through the room, every one present was struck with the magnificence of the act. All but one admired Mary's expression of gratitude. That one was Judas, who loved money for its own sake.

"Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" he muttered, not that he cared for the poor, but because he wanted the handling of the money.

"Let her alone," Jesus said, with his loving look for Mary. "Why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always."

The rebuke to Judas, instead of making him repentant, stung him to anger. What had he to gain by staying with this master who was surely leading his followers to death? While there was time, he would make his peace with the Sanhedrin.

When the meal was over, Judas did not go with his friends to quiet rest, but making some excuse left them and hastened down the hillside back to Jerusalem. Although it was late, the temple guard admitted him, and when they found his errand hastily summoned the chief priests.

"What will ye give me," Judas asked, "if I will deliver Jesus into your hands?"

Pleased as the priests were with his offer, they haggled with the traitor until they induced him to accept thirty pieces of silver—about fifteen dollars—as the price of his promise to watch until Jesus should be in some quiet place alone, and to notify the Sanhedrin. Then with his guilty secret Judas went back to Bethany.

V. THURSDAY

THURSDAY evening was the time for the Passover supper of unleavened bread and of the lamb roast with herbs. The disciples had probably wondered among themselves whether Jesus would dare go to Jerusalem to eat this meal, for on Thursday morning they came to him with a question.

"Where wilt thou," they asked, "that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?"

"Go into the city," Jesus answered, for he never knew fear, "and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, 'The master saith, Where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared; there make ready for us."

Peter and John, the two most trusted of Jesus' disciples, went to do the errand. When evening fell Jesus with the others went once more down the beloved slope of the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem and found the place Peter and John had prepared.

As they sat at this last meal with their master, for the third time the disciples began the foolish quarrel as to which of them was greatest and which should have the most important seat at the table.

"He that is greatest among you," Jesus pronounced once more, "let him be as he that serves," and rising from the table Jesus took a towel, and in the manner of the East poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet.

"Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" protested Peter.

"What I do," Jesus said, "thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

"Thou shalt never wash my feet," declared impetuous Peter.

"If I wash thee not, then thou hast no part with me," Jesus answered.

"Lord, not my feet only," Peter cried, "but also my hands and my head."

"He that is washed," Jesus said, "needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. And ye are clean—but not all." And Judas must have known what he meant.

"I am among you as one that serveth," Jesus said as he sat down again. "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."

As they ate Jesus spoke again. "Verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me."

Overcome with sorrow, eleven of them poured out eager questions. "Is it I, Lord?" "Lord, is it I?"

Peter signed to John, who sat next to Jesus, to ask who it was.

"Who is it, Lord?" John whispered.

"It is he to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it," Jesus said.

"Lord, is it I?" Judas' guilty conscience forced him to ask after all the rest.

"Thou hast said," Jesus answered, and handed him the piece of bread he had dipped in the dish. "What thou doest, do quickly."

No one but John had caught Jesus' answer evidently, for no one at the table understood the master's last words. They thought that Judas as purse-bearer was being sent to buy something for the feast. But Judas knew what Jesus meant and, with mingled fear and anger, rose from his place and went out into the night.

Alone with those who loved him Jesus could speak out his whole heart. "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," he said, "for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Then he took bread and blessed it and brake it and gave it to them. "Take, eat," he said, "this is my body."

And he took the cup and thanked God and passed it to the eleven, and they all drank. "This is my blood of the new testament," he said, "which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, 'Whither I go, ye cannot come,'—so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

"Lord, whither goest thou?" broke in Peter.

"Whither I go," Jesus answered, "thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

"Lord," cried Peter, "why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."

"Simon, Simon," Jesus answered with his loving gentleness, "behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.'"

"Though all shall be offended," said Peter stoutly, "yet will not I. I am ready to go with thee both into prison, and to death."

"Peter," answered his master, "the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

"If I should die with thee," declared Peter, "I will not deny thee in any wise."

Jesus without protesting further turned to them with the words that have comforted more hearts than any words ever written.

"Let not your heart be troubled," he began, and went on to say that though he was going away, the Father would send to his disciples the spirit of truth which had been with him, and this spirit of truth should abide with them, their Comforter, to guide them into all truth. Then he told them of his oneness with the Father through love, and that through love they might be at one with the Son, as the branch is one with the vine. "And herein is my Father glorified," he said, "that ye bear much fruit."

When he had finished his wonderful talk, Jesus, while the eleven stood around, prayed to his Father that these men whom God had given him might be preserved from all the dangers and temptations of the kingdoms of the earth and live always in the kingdom of God where is eternal life.

"This is life eternal," he said, "that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

With these wonderful, passionate, yearning words of truth and life and love ringing in their ears, silently the disciples followed Jesus down from the upper chamber, out of the gate of Jerusalem, across the brook Kidron, toward the Mount of Olives, into the Garden of Gethsemane. And Judas saw them go.

"Sit ye here," said Jesus to the disciples as they entered the garden, "while I shall pray," and then, knowing that the hour was close upon him when his human life should answer for the sins of the world, anxious for comfort and companion-

ship, he picked out the three he most relied on, Peter, John and James, and took them with him.

They were too overcome, however, to be any help in Jesus' hour of supreme sorrow, and them too he left. "Tarry ye here and watch," he told them. "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death.

Alone, Jesus went further into the garden, and falling on his knees prayed the prayer whose agony made him sweat drops of blood. "Abba, Father," he cried, "all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

When he arose and went back to his three disciples, they were asleep. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" he asked sadly, and went once more away alone.

"O, my Father," he prayed, "if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done."

When he came back to the three again they were asleep, and Jesus did not waken them, but for the third time went away alone.

"Father, save me from this hour," was his inward cry, "but for this cause came I unto this hour." Those words spoken in the temple were surely with him now, in his agony, as he realized that unless his pathway lay through death itself, those whom he came to save could not follow him into the kingdom of heaven. "Thy will be done," he repeated the third time, and then angels from heaven came to give him the strength and comfort which his disciples had failed to give. Courageous and calm he went back to his sleeping friends.

"The hour is come," he said. "Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand."

Almost before the three were awake, through the shadows of the garden came Judas, followed by a large temple guard with their arms. The guard watched Judas, for he had told them that the one he should kiss was the one they wanted.

Straight to Jesus went Judas, the most miserable traitor in all history. "Master, Master," he exclaimed, as if glad to see him again, and kissed him.

"Judas," Jesus said, "betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

The guard rushed forward to lay hands on Jesus, but before they could touch him, Peter, awake now, with his sword cut off the ear of the man nearest him.

"Put up thy sword," Jesus said, and stretching out his hand healed the ear that Peter had wounded.

"Are ye come out," Jesus asked, "as against a thief, with swords and with staves, to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not."

There was no more resistance. The guard bound Jesus and led him back

"STRAIGHT TO JESUS WENT JUDAS. 'MASTER, MASTER,' HE EXCLAIMED AS IF GLAD TO SEE HIM, AND KISSED HIM"

across the Kidron into Jerusalem and to the house of Annas, who, with his son-in-law Caiaphas, acted as high priest. The disciples, anxious and terrified, followed the guard at a distance and entered the house with them.

"What is it that you teach?" Annas asked Jesus.

"I spake openly to the world," Jesus answered; "I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said."

The guard who stood by him struck Jesus a blow. "Answereth thou the high priest so?" he asked.

"If I have spoken evil," Jesus said, "bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?"

Annas gave up his attempt at questioning, and sent Jesus bound to the house of his son-in-law Caiaphas, the actual high priest, and again the disciples followed and went into the palace with the crowd. Peter stood to warm himself.

It was too late an hour for the Sanhedrin to be in session, but all the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees were gathered at the palace of the high priest to receive Jesus. Witnesses had been brought to convict him, and at once they began their accusations, but they had not had time to prepare their evidence and none of their testimony agreed. To nothing that they said would Jesus answer.

"Answereth thou nothing?" said the high priest impatiently.

Still Jesus was silent.

Peter from the hall where he was warming himself at the fire was watching the proceedings eagerly, but he was disturbed when a maid spoke to him.

"Thou also," she said, "wast with Jesus of Nazareth."

"I know not what thou sayest," denied Peter and went out into the porch. Jesus watched him go.

"Art thou the Christ?" demanded the high priest of Jesus.

"I am," Jesus said, for his hour had come.

In the uproar that followed, the maid once more saw Peter in the porch. "This is one of them," she said to the by-standers.

"I do not know the man," swore Peter, and went back into the tumultuous hall.

"What need we of further witnesses?" shouted the high priest. "Ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye?"

"He is guilty of death," they all cried.

The Sanhedrin had not the power of life and death; all orders for executions

must come from the Roman governor; and this irregular assembly had not the power even to pronounce a decision of the Sanhedrin, which could not be gathered until the morning. For the remainder of the night Jesus was put in charge of the temple guards, and they, in their brutal indifference, until daylight played rough games with the Saviour of the world and heaped on him coarse ridicule.

Peter, afraid and miserable, still stood in the hall watching Jesus and the guard, until another palace servant spoke to him.

"Surely thou art one of them," the man said. "Thou are a Galilean; thy speech betrayeth thee."

With oaths and curses, for the third time Peter declared, "I know not the man." While he was speaking, the cock crowed its signal of the approaching day, and as Peter heard it and looked at his master, Jesus turned and looked at him, still in love and confidence.

Struck with remorse, in tears Peter went out of the high priest's palace, and that last look of Jesus' was burned forever into his heart.

Chapter VII—THE CRUCIFIXION

AT the first possible moment Friday morning the Sanhedrin gathered to pronounce their verdict that Jesus was worthy of death because he had claimed to be the Christ. They did not examine the evidence of the prophets nor of Jesus' teachings and deeds to see if his claim was just. In their hatred all that they wanted was to thrust his purity out of the world. They could not endure its light.

When they found that Pilate was in his council hall, they bound Jesus and sent him under guard to the governor, but they themselves did not go into the Roman council hall lest contact with Gentiles should make them ceremonially unclean for the Passover.

Judas had lingered about to see what would occur. As he saw the malignity of the priests and Sanhedrin and the silent, calm dignity of the master with whom he had lived so long, a great remorse smote him. For the first time he realized the terrible thing he had done, and the money he had taken seemed to burn him. When Jesus was led away, Judas hastened to the chief priests.

"I have sinned," Judas cried, holding the money out to them, "in that I have betrayed innocent blood."

They turned from him contemptuously. "What is that to us? See thou to

that," they said, for now that they had seized Jesus they cared no more for Judas.

Rent with misery Judas dashed the coins on the floor, and went out alone along the streets and through the city gate down to the valley of Hinnom, where the later kings of Judah had worshiped Moloch. There Judas hanged himself, while Pilate, the Roman governor, was in Jerusalem examining the Son of Man whom Judas had betrayed into his hands.

The purity and fearlessness of Jesus impressed Pilate at once, and he could see no reason why the Jews should want him judged. Coming out into the open, he spoke to the chief priests.

"What accusation bring ye against this man?" he demanded.

"If he were not a malefactor," they answered, "we would not have delivered him up to thee. We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ a king."

"Art thou the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked, turning to Jesus.

"Thou hast said," Jesus answered.

"I find no fault in this man," Pilate declared.

"He stirreth up the people," insisted the priests, using the charge most likely to excite a Roman, "by teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."

"Is he a Galilean?" asked Pilate, and glad to be relieved of the task of judging a man whom he knew innocent, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, the king of Galilee, who was in Jerusalem for the Passover.

Herod was glad to see Jesus, of whom he had heard so much; he wanted for curiosity's sake to see a miracle done. But Jesus, who would give no sign to the Pharisees, would not play with God's power to amuse the king. He stood utterly silent while the priests and scribes poured out their accusations, and declared that Jesus, instead of Herod, claimed to be king of the Jews. The claim Herod treated with ridicule. When he found Jesus would not speak, he dressed him in a royal robe and sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends from that hour.

"Take ye him," Pilate said, giving Jesus again to the Sanhedrin, "and judge him according to your law."

"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," answered the council bluntly, and Pilate knew then that they were determined on Jesus' death.

Pilate stood irresolute. He wanted to save Jesus, but he dared not risk a Jewish tumult. "Art thou the king of the Jews?" he asked again.

"Sayest thou this thing of thyself," Jesus asked, "or did others tell it thee of me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate answered. "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done?"

"My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus said. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence."

"Art thou a king then?" asked Pilate curiously.

"Thou sayest I am a king," Jesus replied. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

"What is truth?" asked Pilate, but getting no answer, turned again to the throng of Jews. "Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. No, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. Ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the Passover; will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews?"

The mob that had gathered no doubt held some of the men who had escorted Jesus into Jerusalem with hosannas only six days before, but Jesus was a prisoner now, and the chief priests and Pharisees had been busily telling the people that he was an imposter. It was, they thought, after all safer to side with those in authority, and they too cried out for Jesus' death.

"Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas," they shouted. Barabbas was in prison for theft and murder.

While Pilate hesitated, there came to him a message from his wife. "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

"Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" Pilate asked once more, hoping for mercy from the mob.

"Barabbas!" they shouted.

"What shall I do then," he asked, "with Jesus which is called Christ?"

"Crucify him!" they cried.

"Why, what evil hath he done?" protested Pilate.

"We have a law," said the priests, "and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

"I have found no cause of death in him," Pilate said, more afraid than ever. "I will therefore chastise him and let him go."

"If thou let this man go," cried the priests, "thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar."

That struck home. If the Jews should report to Tiberius that the governor of Judea let escape a man who was a rebel against Rome, it might cost Pilate his place. Much as he feared to kill Jesus, he feared Rome more.

"Crucify him! Crucify him!" shrieked the mob, while Pilate hesitated.

Then Pilate yielded. He called for water, and in the sight of the multitude washed his hands. "I am innocent of the blood of this just person," he said. "See ye to it."

"His blood be upon us and upon our children," cried the people, calling down upon themselves an awful responsibility.

Pilate released Barabbas, scourged Jesus, and then delivered him to the chief priests.

"Behold your king," he said. "Shall I crucify your king?"

"We have no king but Cæsar," answered the chief priests, denying definitely their knowledge of the kingdom of heaven.

The soldiers led Jesus away, again in mockery clothing him in the purple robe and making a crown of thorns to set upon his head and bending the knee to him. Jesus, close in communion with his Father, answered them not a word. Did any one in this cruel throng remember Isaiah's words?

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

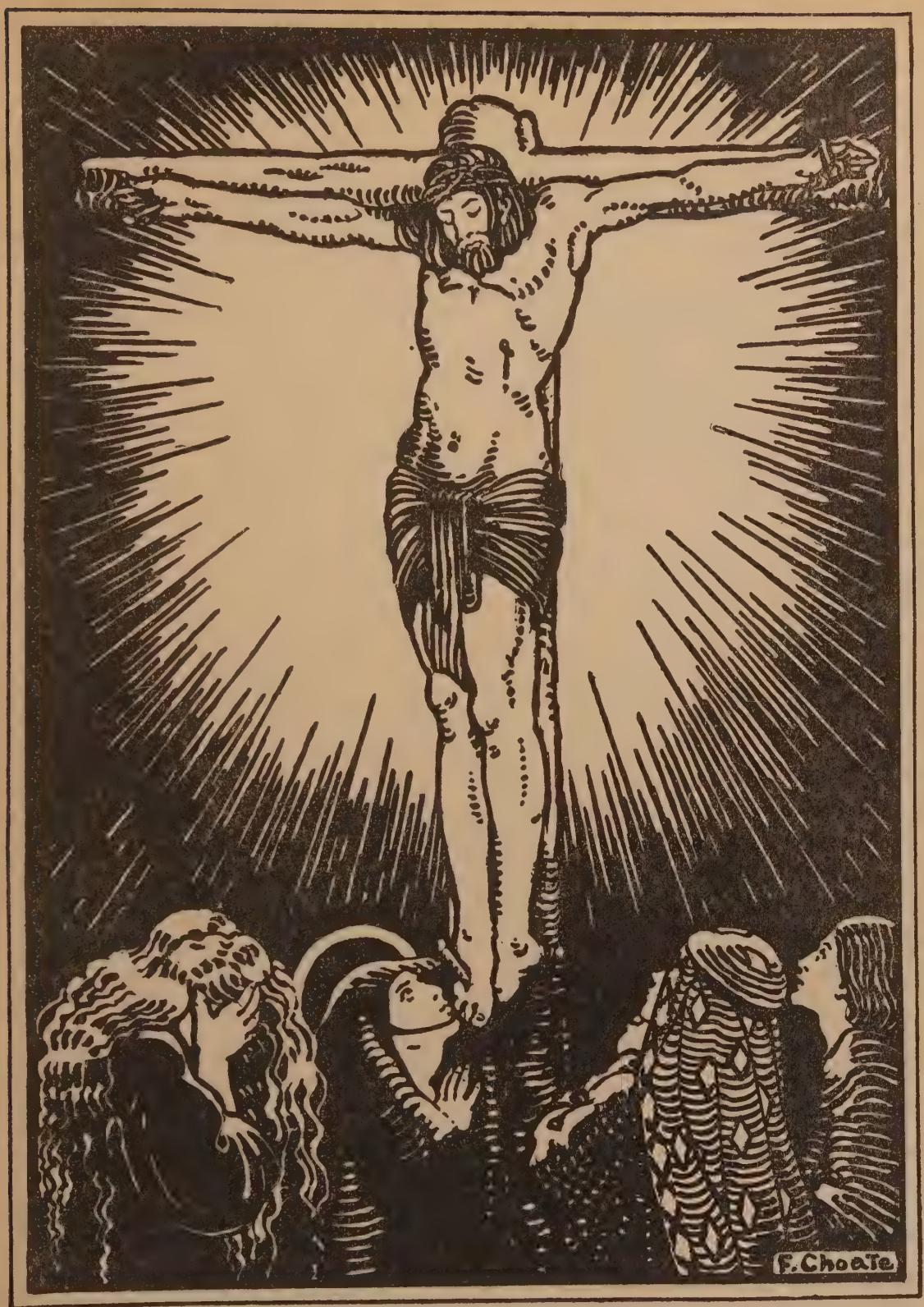
"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers, is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

On Jesus' back was bound the cross on which he was to be crucified, and he was led out of the city to Calvary, followed by a great multitude of sorrowing, weeping people. As they went they met a man from Cyrene, and he was made to carry the cross.

On Calvary they crucified the Son of God, with a malefactor on each side of him.

"Father," Jesus prayed, "forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Jesus' clothes the guard divided among themselves, but when they came to his under garment, woven in one piece, instead of cutting it they cast lots for it,



"'FATHER,' JESUS PRAYED, 'FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO'"

while Jesus' mother stood below weeping, and his disciple John and many of the women who had followed him.

Over the cross Pilate wrote a sign in Latin and Greek and Hebrew: "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." It did not please the chief priests.

"Write not," they objected, " 'the king of the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am king of the Jews.' "

"What I have written, I have written," Pilate answered shortly.

The Pharisees, although they could not alter the sign, showed their malignant hate by wagging their heads and crying, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver him now, if He will have him; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

They did not know that it was still for the salvation of those others that Jesus must endure the agony of death.

The thieves too on each side of him reviled him. "If thou be the Christ," one of them said fiercely, "save thyself and us."

But the second thief, who was beginning to understand Jesus' courage and serenity, rebuked him. "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Then he turned to Jesus. "Lord," he begged, "remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee," Jesus promised, thinking of others even in his supreme agony, "to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

And then as noon approached clouds covered the sun and the heavens darkened. Jesus, as he looked at the people around him, saw his weeping mother and John, the disciple that he loved. Their presence must have cheered his heart, and even in his suffering he provided comfort for them both.

"Woman," he said tenderly to Mary, "behold thy son," and then turning his eyes to John he said, "Behold thy mother." John accepted the trust; and from that hour Mary became his mother.

As the afternoon wore on and the darkness deepened, Jesus grew near to death. Then his suffering and mental anguish because the people he had come to save had crucified him forced from him a heart-broken cry. "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which meant, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

"He calls for Elijah," said a soldier, and ran quickly with a drink for Jesus,

and he accepted it. Then with his unbreakable fortitude strong again, he whispered, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit."

After a moment he spoke once more. "It is finished," he said and died.

At that moment when the darkness shut in the world there came an earthquake in Jerusalem.

"Truly," said the frightened centurion who commanded the guard, "this man was the Son of God."

In Jerusalem the earthquake tore in two pieces the curtain that shut in the Holy of Holies in the temple. The priests, who worshiped the temple of God and killed the Son of God, could not perceive what it meant, but Peter and John and the later disciple Paul came to understand in time that the tearing away of the temple veil ended forever the old ritualistic worship and declared again that God is Spirit to be worshiped in spirit and in truth. Jesus had given his life to bring this gift to man. His death ended the old covenant which God had made with Abraham, and opened the new covenant or testament between God and man.

The crucifixion was on Friday, and as the next day was the Sabbath, the Jews would not pollute it by allowing the crosses to stand. The thieves, who were still alive, were killed, and a soldier thrust his spear into Jesus' side. Then the bodies were taken from the cross.

Besides Nicodemus, Jesus had among the Pharisees another friend, Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph went secretly to Pilate and begged that he might have Jesus' body, and Pilate agreed. Nicodemus and Joseph came that night, bringing spices and fine linen, and the two men prepared Jesus for the grave, which was to be in Joseph's family tomb, wherein no one had ever yet been laid. Mary Magdalene and the other women followed to see where Jesus was buried, but the disciples were not there. John had taken Mary away to comfort her, Peter was mourning his faithlessness, and the rest had scattered.

It was Friday night when they laid Jesus in the tomb, and rolled before the mouth of the cave the large stone that made its door. The chief priests, when they found where Jesus was buried, went also to Pilate.

"Sir," they said, "we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead'; so the last error shall be worse than the first."

"Ye have a guard," Pilate answered, "go your way, make it as sure as you can."

The chief priests therefore sealed the great stone in its place and set a watch

over the tomb. Then, satisfied with the result of their malice, they went home to sanctify themselves for the approaching holy Sabbath day.

Chapter VIII—THE RESURRECTION

I. THE WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE

THROUGH the Sabbath the people kept the Passover in Jerusalem, the priests fulfilled the offices in the temple, and the guard watched the tomb where Jesus was buried. As Friday night had passed, so passed Saturday night, and Sunday morning, the first day of the week, began to dawn.

Before any one was astir in Jerusalem, and before any of the sorrowing women had started out of the city to weep by the tomb, Jesus had proved that he had power over death for himself as well as for others. A second earthquake had shaken Jerusalem and burst the seals which the priests had put upon the stone. Then the terrified guards fell to the ground as a shining presence descended, rolled back the stone and rested upon it.

The women who loved Jesus waited only for the dawn to hasten to the sepulchre with perfumes and spices to honor the body of their crucified Lord.

"Who," they asked as they went, "shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

But when they came to the tomb, the stone was already rolled back, the Jewish guard gone, and in its place an angel whose countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow. The women were too terrified to speak.

"Fear ye not," said the angel, "for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he saith unto you. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' "

Dazed with surprise and hope and joy, the women left the garden and ran back to Jerusalem to find Peter and John, for Peter was once more a loving, faithful disciple of the master he had denied. He had not, like Judas, killed himself, but was ready by a long steadfast life to prove his love and repentance.

The women found Peter and John and breathlessly told them what the angel

"WHEN THEY CAME TO THE TOMB, THE STONE WAS ALREADY ROLLED BACK, AND IN ITS PLACE AN ANGEL WHOSE COUNTENANCE WAS LIKE LIGHTNING AND HIS RAIMENT WHITE AS SNOW"

had said. For a moment the two men looked at each other incredulously, and then by a common impulse started to run to the tomb. John was the younger of the two so he outran Peter and came first to the sepulchre. The angel was gone.

John looked into the cave and found it empty. Then Peter came up, and in his eagerness ran at once into the cave, and John followed him. There was no one there. The two men did not believe what the women had told them; they thought that the Jews had stolen the body.

They said that doubtless to Mary Magdalene, and then they went back to Jerusalem. Mary stooped and looked into the tomb, and there she saw two angels.

"Why weepest thou?" they asked.

"Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him," she answered.

As she turned away, she came face to face with Jesus. In her sorrow she did not know him, but supposed him to be the keeper of the garden.

"Why weepest thou?" Jesus asked too. "Whom seekest thou?"

"Sir," begged Mary, "if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

Just one word Jesus spoke. "Mary!" he said, and right away Mary Magdelene knew him.

"Master!" she cried, and fell at his feet.

"Touch me not," Jesus said gently, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say unto them, 'I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God."

Nothing could make Mary doubt again. She had seen the empty grave and she had seen her risen Lord. Filled with joy, she went quickly back to Jerusalem and told Peter and John that Jesus had indeed proved the powerlessness of death.

II. THE WALK TO EMMAUS

THE news of Jesus' resurrection ran like fire through Jerusalem, carried not only by the disciples but also by the terrified guard who, when they had recovered consciousness, and found the tomb empty, had fled to the city to tell the chief priests.

The Sanhedrin met at once to discuss the matter. If they let the people believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, there was an end to their authority. After they had discussed what was possible for them to do, and had come to a decision, they called back the guard.

"Say ye," they commanded, " 'His disciples came by night and stole him away

while we slept.' And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you."

A very large bribe went to each soldier with the command, so they took the money and did as they were told. The report was circulated everywhere that Jesus' disciples had in the night overpowered the guard and carried away Jesus' body for secret burial.

That same Sunday afternoon two men who had been followers of Jesus, one of them named Cleopas, were walking together to the village of Emmaus outside Jerusalem, and as they went all their talk was of Jesus' death and the sorrow of those who were left behind. Presently Jesus joined them, but they did not know him any more than Mary Magdalene had.

"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad?" Jesus asked.

"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem," exclaimed Cleopas in surprise, "and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?"

"What things?" Jesus asked.

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth," replied Cleopas, "which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not."

"O slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," Jesus said. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

Beginning away back at the time of Moses, Jesus went through the scriptures that he knew so well, and taught the two men all that had been foretold of his coming to bring light into the world, of his suffering because the darkness refused to let the light shine, of his death, and of his overcoming death that he might shine forever as the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. As they listened, the men's hearts thrilled.

Jesus was still talking when they reached Emmaus. "Abide with us," they urged, "for it is toward evening and the day is far spent."

So Jesus went in with them to supper, and as they offered him bread, he blessed it and then breaking it gave them each a piece. Suddenly their eyes

were opened, and they knew who had walked with them. But as they started up in recognition, Jesus vanished from their sight.

"Did not our hearts burn within us," they exclaimed, "while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

Without waiting to finish their meal the two turned back again to Jerusalem, and there found the ten apostles gathered together secretly for fear of the Jews. Thomas was not there.

"The Lord is risen indeed and has appeared unto Simon," they cried to the newcomers.

Eagerly the two told the apostles their own story, and how they had not recognized Jesus until he was made known to them by the breaking of bread. But Peter, who had been forgiven for his faithlessness, did not tell what Jesus had said to him.

III. THOMAS WHO DOUBTED

WHILE the ten apostles were still talking about the walk to Emmaus, suddenly Jesus stood in their midst and they, not yet wholly understanding how he could conquer death, shrank back in terror from what they thought was a spirit.

"Peace be unto you," he said. But they were still frightened. "Why are ye troubled," he asked quietly, "and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

Then they pressed close around him, and found that it was indeed their Lord, who had hung on the cross, and been wounded by the Roman soldier's spear. The ten were almost speechless in their delight, even Peter, who had seen him before.

"Peace be unto you," Jesus repeated. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Spirit."

Then having given his disciples the charge to carry on the work he had begun, Jesus left them as quietly as he had come.

By and by, as they still were talking about the visit of Jesus, Thomas came back. At once they all cried out to him, "We have seen the Lord."

"Except," Thomas said, "I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

All that week the apostles stayed in Jerusalem. And on the next Sunday when they were all together, and the doors shut, Jesus again stood in their midst.

"Peace be unto you," he said again, and turned to Thomas, who would not

believe what the material senses did not tell him. "Reach hither thy finger," Jesus said, "and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it in my side; and be not faithless, but believing."

But Thomas did not need that material evidence now. The sight of Jesus had converted him. "My Lord and my God!" he cried.

"Thomas," Jesus answered, "because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; Blessed are they that have not seen me, and yet have believed. These are the words I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem."

IV. THE MORNING MEAL BY GALILEE

AFTER the conversion of Thomas the apostles left Jerusalem and went back to Galilee. There on a hillside where they were gathered with five hundred men Jesus appeared once more and spoke to them all.

The five hundred scattered to their homes, convinced that Jesus was the Christ, while the apostles went back to Capernaum. Peter, James and John, Nathaniel, Thomas and probably Andrew and Philip kept together, and they were restless and ill at ease because without Jesus they did not know what to do with their lives.

Finally Peter spoke. "I go a-fishing," he said, falling back for comfort on his old occupation.

"We also go with thee," echoed the others.

Immediately they got into the boat and sailed out into the lake. All night they fished, as Peter had one other night before Jesus had called him, and, as on that other night, they caught nothing. Disheartened, as morning dawned, they turned homeward.

As they approached shore Jesus stood before them, but in their depression they did not recognize him.

"Children," Jesus called, "have ye any meat?"

"No," they answered.

"Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find," Jesus said.

Obedient, the disciples threw their net over the other side of the ship, and immediately it was full of fishes. John remembered the night when that had happened to them before, and his heart jumped.

"It is the Lord!" he cried.

As soon as Peter heard the word he girt his fisher's coat about him and leaped over into the sea to go to Jesus. The others brought the boat in, dragging behind them the net filled with fishes. When they reached the shore they found a fire laid and bread waiting.

"Bring of the fish which ye have now caught," Jesus said.

Peter helped the others and they brought the great catch in safety to land.

"Come and dine," Jesus invited them, and on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, in the freshness of a spring morning, Jesus ate his last meal with his disciples.

When they had finished Jesus spoke to Peter. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"

"Yea, Lord," Peter answered, "thou knowest that I love thee."

"Feed my lambs," Jesus said, and the disciples must have gone back in their minds to Jesus' wonderful talk in the temple not long before when he called himself the shepherd of the sheep.

While they were meditating, Jesus spoke again. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

"Yea, Lord," Peter said, "thou knowest that I love thee."

"Feed my sheep," Jesus commanded.

It was not long before Jesus asked the question the third time. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

It grieved Peter to have his master ask him so insistently if he loved him. "Thou knowest all things, Lord," he replied; "thou knowest that I love thee."

"Feed my sheep," Jesus repeated, and Peter knew then that he was not to go back to being a catcher of fish but that, even without his master's personal presence, he was to go on being a fisher of men.

"When thou wast young," Jesus said, "thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Follow me."

Peter had his mission; through trial and hardship and persecution he was to follow the Christ. Then his eyes lighted on John sitting close to Jesus.

"Lord," Peter asked, pointing to the disciple whom Jesus loved, "what shall this man do?"

"If I will that he tarry till I come," Jesus answered, "what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you all; but

tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

After this therefore there was a saying among the disciples, as they watched for the second appearing of the Christ, that John should never die, although Jesus had not said so. John indeed lived longer than any of them and tradition says he was the only one who was not killed for his faith.

V. THE ASCENSION

AFTER the breakfast by the Lake of Galilee the disciples went back to Judea to wait there for Jesus' last directions. They knew now that he would leave them, but that the Comforter would come to be their guide in Jesus' place, and help them to speak words of truth and do deeds of truth by the power of God.

It was forty days after the resurrection that Jesus came for the last time to his disciples in Jerusalem and walked with them over the familiar road toward Bethany. He had finished now his work on earth and was ready to rise out of their sight into the kingdom of heaven, ascending to his Father. As they stood on the hillside Jesus gave his last charge.

"Ye shall not depart from Jerusalem," he said, "but wait for the promise of the Father which ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

"Lord," they asked, "wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

"It is not for you," Jesus answered, "to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Jesus ended with a blessing to his apostles and, as he spoke, he was parted from them and ascended out of their sight into the kingdom of heaven.

Now at last the apostles understood. They had lost their earthly friend, but they had gained the power of God, and would carry it as long as they lived without wavering. Joyously praising God as they walked, the eleven went back to Jerusalem openly to proclaim themselves disciples of the Christ and to wait for the Holy Spirit to descend upon them.

The Acts and Letters of the Apostles

THE HISTORY CONTAINED

IN THE BOOKS OF

THE ACTS · ROMANS

I AND II CORINTHIANS · GALATIANS

EPHESIANS · PHILIPPIANS

COLOSSIANS · I AND II THESSALONIANS

I AND II TIMOTHY · TITUS

PHILEMON · HEBREWS · JAMES

I AND II PETER · JUDE

Chapter I—THE DAY OF PENTECOST

HEN the Sanhedrin had killed Jesus they thought that they had crushed the truth he came to earth to bring. But his eleven apostles, coming back joyfully and fearlessly to Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension, had brought that truth back to Jerusalem, and though it seemed as small as a mustard seed, it was truly to grow into a tree large enough to shelter all men under its branches.

According to Jesus' counsel the apostles went back to the upper room in Jerusalem to pray to God for guidance and for the Comforter Jesus had promised. Others of his disciples gathered there too, until there were more than a hundred people waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' mother was among them and Jesus' brothers, who since his resurrection had become his disciples.

It was not until the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after the Passover, that the Holy Spirit came to the waiting disciples, and in the meantime they had chosen in Judas' place a man named Matthias to be the twelfth apostle. The apostles and disciples were all with one accord in one place on the day of Pentecost when suddenly a stirring like a rushing wind filled the house, and flames of fire shone through the room, resting above the heads of the disciples, who were silent under the heavenly blessing.

Then a strange thing happened. The power and truth of God so filled them that their tongues were loosed and they knew that they could speak that truth in languages that before they had not understood.

The Feast of Pentecost was one of thanksgiving for the early summer fruits, and to celebrate it Jews had come to Jerusalem from far countries. There were Parthians and Medes, Egyptians and Arabians, Cretes and Libyans in the city, and the disciples as they went from their upper room to the temple spoke to all these men in their own language. Crowds flocked together at once to hear unlearned fishermen speaking in foreign tongues.

"Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?" they marveled. "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born, speak the wonderful works of God? What meaneth this?"

"These men are full of new wine," sneered the unbelieving friends of the Pharisees who had also gathered to listen.

Peter with his usual impetuosity turned on them. "These men are not drunken," he denied, "seeing it is but the third hour of the day, but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, 'I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, saith God, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' "

From that text Peter went on in an eloquent address to prove that Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, was indeed the Saviour of the world, the Prince of Peace who, as the prophets had promised, should inherit David's kingdom and hold it forever.

"Therefore," Peter ended, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

The multitude, home Jews and foreign, were struck with consternation by Peter's words. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" they cried out.

"Repent," Peter answered in the words of John Baptist, "and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Eagerly the throng pushed forward to be baptized, and on that Day of Pentecost three thousand men and women became members of the new church.

It was a very simple church where men shared their goods in common, followed the teachings of the apostles, obeyed the laws, praised God, worshiped in the temple, and lived in gladness and singleness of heart, but every day new members were added to it. The Christ the Sanhedrin had tried to kill was now indeed, since he was lifted up, drawing all men unto him.

Chapter II—THE CRIPPLE AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

PETER and John, who had been Jesus' chief friends, became almost at once leaders of the apostles. One afternoon they went together to the temple at the time for prayer, passed in at the east gate through Solomon's porch, across the Court of the Gentiles to the steps at the Beautiful Gate that led them up into the Court of the Women, and at the steps they found a lame man begging.

The man had been a cripple since he was born and he made his living now

by lying at this temple gate and begging small coins from the Jews who passed into the temple. When he saw Peter and John, the lame man begged of them an alms.

The two apostles stopped at his appeal. "Look on us," Peter said to him.

The lame man looked, hoping that this strange request meant a good deal of money.

"Silver and gold have I none," Peter cried, "but such as I have, give I thee. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk."

Then stooping, Peter took the hand of the astonished cripple and lifted him to his feet. The man who had never walked, who had been carried each day to the temple, stood, and then, feeling his strength, walked and leaped, going on with the apostles into the temple to worship, praising God as he went.

The throng passing through the court on their way to prayer who saw the healing of the lame man were filled with amazement. People stopped to talk about it, and when Peter came out again he found a multitude crowded in Solomon's porch discussing the healing of the lame beggar. Peter stopped to address them.

"Ye men of Israel," he said, "why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham hath glorified his Son Jesus and his name hath made this man strong," and then Peter went on to preach Jesus the Christ and to tell the multitude that the resurrection of Jesus had opened to every one who would walk in the straight and narrow way, the entrance to heaven. And as Peter talked, others, and some even of the Sanhedrin, paused to listen.

"God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you," Peter declared, "in turning every one of you from his sins."

The preaching of the resurrection roused the easy-going Sadducees to anger. They would not suffer this man to preach eternal life in the open temple courts. By their order, Peter and John and the cripple were arrested by the temple guard and the crowd was scattered. But through Peter's sermon five thousand men were added to the church.

The next day Peter and John were brought before Caiaphas, the Sadducee high priest, as he presided over the Sanhedrin.

"By what name have ye done this miracle?" Caiaphas asked the apostles.

"Ye elders of Israel," exclaimed Peter, "be it known unto you all that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole."

As the cripple stood by the apostles, perfectly whole, it was not easy to gain-

say Peter's statement. Sending the prisoners away for the moment, the Sanhedrin debated what they could do.

"That a notable miracle hath been done by them," some one said, "is manifest to all them that dwell at Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it."

"But that it spread no further among the people," another advised, "let us straightly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name."

So calling Peter and John they told them that they were free but were under strict command to preach no more on the name of Jesus Christ.

"Whether it be right in the sight of God," Peter replied, "to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Chapter III—ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

FTER the release of Peter and John by the Sanhedrin, the church increased daily in members so united that they gladly shared all their possessions with one another. The money was kept in a common purse which Peter superintended. One of the new members, Barnabas—which means the son of consolation—even sold his land and gave the money which it brought to Peter to be used for the common good.

Among those who had crowded into the new church there was a man named Ananias, who had joined the church because others had, not because he really had been touched by Peter's preaching. When Ananias saw that Barnabas had gained praise for himself by selling his land and giving the money to the church, Ananias thought he would do the same. He sold his land and got a good price for it. When he saw how much it had brought him he began to be sorry that the money was all going to the church.

He talked the matter over with his wife Sapphira, and she felt as he did about giving away so much money. Finally they decided that, as no one but themselves knew what the land sold for, they might as well save out part of the price for their own use and tell Peter that what they gave him was the whole price of the land. In that way they would gain both credit and riches.

Ananias took to Peter the part of the money he had agreed on with Sapphira and told him that he had sold the land and was giving the price of it to the church. Peter looked at him with a piercing gaze.

"Ananias," he said, "why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy

"ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA DECIDED THAT THEY MIGHT AS WELL SAVE OUT PART OF THE PRICE FOR THEIR OWN USE"

Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

When Ananias heard these biting words, his heart failed him. He fell dead at Peter's feet, and the young men carried him out for burial. Three hours later Sapphira, looking for her husband, found Peter.

"Sapphira," Peter asked, naming the sum Ananias had mentioned as the price of the land, "tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?"

"Yea, for so much," she answered boldly.

"How is it," demanded Peter, "that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out."

As Ananias had died, so died Sapphira, and the young men carried her out and buried her by her husband.

Chapter IV—GAMALIEL

IN all Jerusalem the apostles did the deeds their master had done, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowing, and helping the sinner. Whenever they went through the streets people brought out the beds of those that were sick and placed them where Peter was passing by, while everywhere crowds followed him, not only from Jerusalem but from all outlying cities.

The commotion in the city was so great that once more the Sanhedrin ordered the arrest not only of Peter and John but of all the twelve. They were seized, put into the common prison and a guard set over them, to await the meeting of the Sanhedrin in the morning.

The twelve in the prison at dead of night were doubtless at prayer when an angel stood in their midst, beckoned them, and led them out of their cell, through the gate, past the unseeing guard, safely to their own home.

"Go," commanded the angel, "stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life."

As early as the temple was open, therefore, the apostles went in under Solomon's porch and began again to preach Jesus the risen Saviour. While they were there the council came together and sent to the prison for the prisoners.

"The prison truly found we shut with all safety," said the amazed messengers when they returned, "and the keepers standing without before the doors; but when we had opened, we found no man within."

To Caiaphas the matter seemed almost hopeless. He did not believe in a future life; he had killed Jesus who preached eternal life; and now in place of the one man he had thought to kill, there were thousands springing up declaring that Jesus was not dead but had risen to be the Saviour of men. How could they silence these disturbers of the peace? The guard was sent once more, however, into the temple to take the apostles quietly and not to rouse the people. The apostles submitted to the arrest and came again before the Sanhedrin.

"Did not we straitly command you," asked Caiaphas, "that ye should not teach in this name? And behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Caiaphas had forgotten what the Jews had said to Pilate, "His blood be upon us and on our children." He shirked the responsibility now.

"We ought to obey God rather than men," repeated Peter, and told them plainly once more that God had brought Jesus out from under the power of death; that all the apostles had seen the resurrection; that the Comforter had come to them; and that they must speak the message that was given them to speak. Peter's words roused the Sadducees to frenzy, and they were ready to kill him on the spot.

But in the Sanhedrin was a wise and tolerant Pharisee named Gamaliel, the teacher at that time of a devout young Jew, Saul of Tarsus. Gamaliel asked that the prisoners might be removed from the council. Then in his broad wisdom Gamaliel spoke to the Sanhedrin. He called to their minds first two or three tumults which had arisen in Jerusalem lately and had come to nothing, and then advised leaving these men alone.

"Ye men of Israel," he said, "take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found to fight against God."

Gamaliel's logic impressed the Sanhedrin, and they agreed finally to his proposal. The apostles were scourged and then liberated with the charge that they should no more preach the risen Christ.

But these men, who had all but one been afraid to acknowledge Jesus, went now in the strength of the Holy Spirit rejoicing that they were worthy to suffer persecution because of him. They paid no attention to the command of the San-

hedrin, but daily in the temple taught the religion of Christ so convincingly that even some of the priests came into the new church.

Chapter V—STEPHEN

AS the church grew in numbers it became impossible for the apostles to carry on both its spiritual and material work, and seven deacons were chosen to look after its temporal business. Among these deacons were two devout men, Stephen, a Greek Jew, and Philip, who lived in Cæsarea, which the Roman governor had made his capital.

Stephen at once distinguished himself by his healing and by his forceful speeches, which were so logical that the orthodox Jews could not answer them and hated Stephen the more on that account. They tried their best to convict Stephen of some wrong, and when they could find no wrong in his blameless life, they hired false witnesses who accused Stephen to the Sanhedrin. Stephen was arrested and brought before the council.

"We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God," the false witnesses asserted.

"Are these things so?" asked the high priest.

Stephen, his face as pure and shining as an angel's, answered: "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken!" And beginning at Abraham, Stephen, in glowing words, told to the fathers of the Jewish religion the story of the working out of God's covenant with His people. Abraham alone in his generation had heard God's voice. After him came Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Moses and David, who had all of them walked with God, while the men around them disobeyed God's commandments, shut their ears to His voice, violated God's house, and killed His prophets. Then Stephen turned on his listeners.

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears," he cried, "ye do always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers."

The Pharisees hated to hear anything like this; they hated to be reminded of their murder of the Just One, and when Stephen spoke his name, with fierce cries they started from their seats.

Stephen, with his smiling, unshaken confidence, was looking into heaven.

"Behold," he said, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."

They stopped their ears at that and, rushing upon Stephen—although the Sanhedrin had no legal power to order an execution—they bore him out of the city and stoned him beyond the gates. Young Saul of Tarsus, who had not learned the broad tolerance of his master Gamaliel, was in charge of the men who killed Stephen and urged them on.

"Lord Jesus," Stephen cried on his knees, "receive my spirit." And then, like his master, in love he added, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Thus Stephen died, the first martyr of the Christian church.

Chapter VI—PHILIP

TEPHEN'S martyrdom was the beginning in Jerusalem of a general persecution of the new church. It was led by Saul of Tarsus, who entered every house and when he found any one of the new religion haled him to prison. Finally the persecution became so fierce that only the apostles stayed in Jerusalem; the other members of the church scattered through the country, seeking refuge in cities where they would be less observed.

Philip the deacon went to Samaria, and the Samaritans who had listened to Jesus listened also gladly to Philip. They brought their sick also to him and he healed them by the power of God, making the lame and paralyzed to walk, and the insane to rejoice in sanity. Samaria was a joyful city.

As time went on, the Samaritans took from Philip more than mere physical healing; they listened eagerly to what he told them about the kingdom of God and about Jesus Christ, who had opened to all men the doors of that kingdom, and as they accepted salvation, they were baptized and became members of the church.

There was in Samaria a magician named Simon Magus, who by his pretended sorceries had obtained hold over the people and had made them believe that he was a great man. But in his largest pretensions he had never been able to accomplish the things that Philip did so quietly, and he was interested in Philip's work. By and by Simon joined the church and was baptized.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard what good work Philip was doing in Samaria they sent Peter and John to help him organize the new church. The apostles when they arrived laid hands of consecration on those whom they thought

best fitted to rule the church, praying that the gift of the Holy Spirit might fall on these new disciples so that they too might do the works of Christ.

When Simon Magus saw the power that thus came to the Samaritans he was more eager than ever. Though he was not probably wholly a hypocrite, he was like those who had followed Jesus for the loaves and fishes. He thought that he could make a good deal of money if he could do what Peter had done and he wondered if perhaps the apostles would sell the gift.

With a large sum of money Simon approached Peter. "Give me also this power," he said, "that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit."

Peter in his new strength had lost nothing of his impetuosity. "Thy money perish with thee," he exclaimed, "because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money!"

At last Philip was called by the Lord to leave Samaria and go to Gaza. As he traveled he met a steward of the Ethiopian queen Candace. The man had been to Jerusalem, and now as he drove homeward in his chariot was reading the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading.

"How can I," answered the steward, "unless some man should guide me?"

Philip got into the chariot then and explained to the steward that Isaiah's writing was about the Messiah, and that Jesus in his life and death and resurrection had fulfilled these prophecies. He told him too of the new church.

"See," said the eager steward, pointing to a stream they were passing, "here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Philip baptized the man and sent him on his way rejoicing, while he himself took his own journey and came finally to his home in Cæsarea.

Chapter VII—SAUL THE PHARISEE

N the meantime in Jerusalem Saul of Tarsus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the followers of Jesus, did not let the Sanhedrin's zeal in persecution flag. When Saul had, as he felt, done all he could to stamp out the new religion in Jerusalem, he went to the high priest and asked from him a letter to the synagogue at Damascus that if he should find any heretics there they might be brought bound to Jerusalem to be punished.

But Saul of Tarsus never arrested in Damascus any followers of Jesus. As

he came near the city, he, the stern, ritualistic Pharisee, was met by a heavenly vision. Suddenly a light shone around him, so bright that it blinded him, and he fell to the earth.

"Saul, Saul," came a voice which knew that Saul would open his ears to the truth, "why persecutest thou me?"

"Who art thou, Lord?" asked the proud young Pharisee, trembling.

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," the voice answered. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Amazed, Saul spoke again. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

"Arise," came the answer, "and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The men who were with Saul heard the voice, but seeing no man, were speechless with astonishment. When Saul rose, still blind, they took him by the hand and led him like a child into Damascus to the house of a man named Judas. Three days he stayed there, seeing nothing with his outward eyes and refusing meat and drink as he pondered on the heavenly vision.

In Damascus was a disciple Ananias, one of those whom Saul had come to capture. To him too came the voice of God.

"Ananias," it said.

"Behold, I am here, Lord," answered Ananias.

"Arise," was the command, "and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of one Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."

"Lord, I have heard by many of this man," protested Ananias, "how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name."

"Go thy way," answered the voice, "for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Ananias obeyed then. Leaving his house, he went to where Saul was and gently laid his hand on him. "Brother Saul," he said to the persecutor, "the Lord, even Jesus, that appeareth unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

At Ananias' words Saul's blindness fell from him. Free and glad of heart, he ate and drank and went into the synagogue to preach the new religion.

Saul, turning all the energy he had used against the church into its defense,

made many bitter enemies for himself among the orthodox Jews. Perhaps to save him from these enemies Saul was sent into Arabia, where he stayed some time. Then he returned to Damascus, and finding his enemies there still determined to kill him, the disciples let Saul down over the city wall by night and sent him to Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem church had suffered too much at Saul's hands to believe all at once in his conversion. It was not until Barnabas, the son of consolation, vouched for Saul and told the story of the heavenly vision that the church would receive him. Peter, John and James the Just gave him the right hand of fellowship. Then, welcomed into their midst, Saul spoke as boldly in Jerusalem as he had at Damascus and made as many enemies. When the disciples knew that these enemies were also lying in wait to kill Saul, they took him as far as Philip's home in Cæsarea, and from there sent him to his native city.

Chapter VIII—PETER PREACHES TO THE GENTILES

PONTIUS PILATE had been deposed before this time and another Roman governor put in his place over Judea. Caiaphas also had been deprived of his office. Now Tiberius died and Caligula became emperor of Rome. He took from prison Herod Agrippa, nephew of Herod Antipas, and gave to Agrippa for a kingdom the land beyond Jordan over which his uncle Philip had ruled.

For a time the churches of Palestine were free from persecution and added daily to their numbers Jews from at home and abroad.

The time now was coming when not only Jews but Gentiles should be received into the church. The first one to preach a world-wide religion was Peter. James, the brother of Jude, who may have been a cousin of Jesus, was put in charge of the church at Jerusalem. Though we do not hear so much about this James as we do about Peter and John and Paul and James the brother of John, he was so wise a man that he was called James the Just. The Epistle of James was written by him, and the Epistle of Jude was written by his brother.

With James caring for the church in Jerusalem, Peter was free to start on his journey. His first stopping-place was Lydda, where there lived a man named Æneas, who had been for eight years a paralytic, unable to leave his bed. When Peter came to Lydda some one brought him to Æneas.

"Æneas," Peter said in his direct way, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise and make thy bed."

At once Æneas arose healed, and every one who saw him walking was eager to join a church that gave such proofs of its power.

While Peter was at Lydda some one sent for him to go to Joppa, the seaport from which Jonah had sailed when he tried to escape his missionary journey to Nineveh. Peter found Joppa very sad, for a certain good woman named Dorcas had just died. Dorcas in Greek meant gazelle, and in Syriac the word for gazelle was Tabitha, so she was called both names. She had been a mother to the town, using her money and her needle to clothe every one who needed her help, and the city was now lamenting the loss of one whom it loved so well. As soon as Peter arrived he was hurried to the room where Dorcas lay waiting for burial.

The room was filled with poor people weeping for their friend and showing each other the garments which Dorcas had made for them. Peter asked them all to leave the room.

Alone, he knelt down by the bed and prayed. Then, confident in God's love and power, he stood up.

"Tabitha," he exclaimed, "arise!"

She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand, and she did indeed arise, and spoke again to all her friends. The news of the miracle spread through Joppa and brought many into the church. Peter stayed in Joppa to teach the converts. He lodged with Simon, a tanner.

In Philip's native city Cæsarea, some thirty-five miles from Joppa, where the Roman governor held his court, there was a Roman officer named Cornelius, captain of the Italian Band. He was a good man, kind to the poor, and he had learned of the one God and to Him he prayed. Although, like Candace's steward, he had not had much instruction, he had an open heart for it, and as he pondered one day a messenger from God appeared to him and called him by name.

"What is it, Lord?" Cornelius asked.

"Thy prayer and thine alms," said the angel, "are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside; he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."

At once Cornelius called three men of his company and sent them to Joppa to find Peter.

As they were approaching Joppa about noon, Peter, knowing nothing of their coming, was waiting for his dinner, for he was very hungry. While he waited he went up on the housetop to pray, and as he prayed, he too had a vision. He saw

a great sheet, knotted at the corners, let down from heaven to earth, and in the sheet were all kinds of birds and beasts and creeping things.

"Rise, Peter, kill and eat," said a voice.

"Not so, Lord," protested Peter, "for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean."

"What God hath cleansed," spoke the voice, "that call thou not common."

Three times the sheet appeared to Peter, and he wondered greatly why there should come to him from heaven things which his Jewish ritual had taught him were unfit for a Jew to touch. While he pondered, forgetting his hunger, Cornelius' men came through the Joppa streets and stopped at the house of Simon the tanner. Then the voice spoke again to Peter.

"Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

Peter went down therefore to Cornelius' messengers. "I am him whom ye seek," he said. "What is the cause wherefore ye are come?"

"Cornelius the centurion," they answered, "a just man and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."

Peter took the men in, fed and lodged them, and the next morning started back with them to Cæsarea, still pondering on his vision that had told him that in God's sight no one is common or unclean. With him went six disciples.

When they came to Cæsarea and to Cornelius' house, they found him waiting with a great many of his friends. As soon as he saw Peter, Cornelius dropped to his knees.

"Stand up," Peter said. "I myself also am a man. Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to come unto one of another nation, but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?"

Cornelius told Peter of his vision and how he had sent at once for Peter. "Now therefore," he ended, "we are all here present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons," Peter exclaimed, and preached to the eager multitude the risen Christ. As they listened with earnest, open hearts, the gift of the Holy Spirit fell on them, as it had come on the gathered disciples in Jerusalem, and all the Jews present marveled that it should come to the Gentiles.

"Can any man forbid water," asked Peter in awe, "that these should be baptized which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"

So Cornelius and all his family and friends were baptized and received into the church. Peter, by the word of God, had broken down the wall which shut in the Jews alone as God's peculiar people, and had declared that God's covenant opened the kingdom of heaven to all the world.

Chapter IX—PETER IN PRISON

HEN Peter came back from Cæsarea to Jerusalem the strictly Jewish members of the church were full of reproach because he had visited a Gentile and eaten with him. Peter told them of his vision in Joppa; of Cornelius' message which the Lord had commanded him to obey; of his going to Cæsarea; and how the Holy Spirit had fallen on the Gentiles.

"Then remembered I the word of the Lord," Peter ended, "how that He said, 'John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?"

Even the strictest Jew, convinced by Peter's story, glorified God, saying, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Peter stayed in Jerusalem, where once more persecution broke out against the church. Caligula had been succeeded in Rome by Claudius, and the new emperor had added to Herod Agrippa's dominion by making him king of Judea and Samaria in place of the Roman governor. The chief desire of this Herod Agrippa I was to have the people flatter him, so in order to win the regard of the Jews he attacked the new church. James, John's brother, he killed outright, and Peter he put into prison until after the Passover, when he meant to have a great public execution.

So important had Peter become to the church that the thought of losing him struck fear to the hearts of all his friends. In every church prayer was offered unceasingly for his deliverance. But Peter in prison, guarded always by four soldiers, two in his cell and two at the prison door, seemed to be doomed. On the night before his execution his friends gathered at the house of John Mark, a nephew to Barnabas. There they prayed all night for him.

Peter had prayed for himself too; and so great was his trust in God that on that same night he was quietly sleeping in his cell between the two soldiers to

whom he was chained. He knew that God would take care of him, but he did not know how.

At midnight there came into the prison, unseen by the guard, an angel of the Lord. A light shone before the angel, but the soldiers slept on. Only Peter, open to heavenly visions, awaked.

"Arise up quickly," said the angel, touching him.

At the touch Peter's chains fell off and Peter, wide awake, stepped out from between the two sleeping soldiers.

"Gird thyself. Bind on thy sandals. Cast thy garment about thee and follow me," commanded the angel.

Peter did all that he was told, but he was not yet sure that he was not in a dream. Following the angel, he passed the unseeing guard outside his cell and the guard at the prison door. The great iron gate opened at the angel's word, and they passed out into the city streets. Then, as Peter stood free, the angel left him.

For a few moments Peter stood dazed, and then he came to himself.

"Now," he exclaimed, "I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod."

He waited no longer, but hastened to the house of Mary, Mark's mother, where his friends were praying for him. They could scarcely believe at first that their prayers had been answered. When they had heard Peter's wonderful story, they sent a messenger to tell the news to the church, while they themselves thanked God from their hearts for Peter's deliverance.

Not long after this Herod Agrippa I died. A Roman governor was put once more over Judea, and a kingdom east of Jordan was given to Herod's son, Herod Agrippa II.

Chapter X—SAUL AND BARNABAS CALLED TO BE MISSIONARIES

THE members of the church who had left Jerusalem when Stephen had been killed had gone through all Palestine preaching only to the Jews. But after Peter had received Cornelius into the church some men from Cyprus came to Antioch and preached to the Greeks that were in the city.

The Jerusalem church heard of the preaching in Antioch and sent Barnabas to that city, and Barnabas, summoning Saul from Tarsus, founded the church in

"THERE CAME INTO THE PRISON AN ANGEL OF THE LORD. PETER'S CHAINS FELL OFF AND HE STEPPED OUT FROM BETWEEN THE SLEEPING SOLDIERS"

Antioch. It was here that the members of the new sect first received the name of Christians.

While Saul and Barnabas were working in Antioch, there came to the city a prophet named Agabus, who predicted that a great famine would occur before long in Judea and that the Jerusalem church would be in need of help. Immediately the new church in Antioch collected a large sum of money and sent it to Jerusalem by Saul and Barnabas and a young man named Titus. On their arrival they were greeted warmly by James, Peter and John, and it was decided that while Peter and John should preach to the Jews, Saul and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles.

Scarcely were Barnabas and Saul back in Antioch when they were called to a larger work.

"Separate me Barnabas and Saul," came the word of the Lord, "for the work whereunto I have called them."

Ready to go wherever they were sent, the two men, with Barnabas' nephew John Mark, crossed to Cyprus, preached at Salamis at the east end where they landed, and then went on across the island to Paphos on the east coast. On the island of Cyprus Saul changed his name to Paul.

From Paphos Paul and Barnabas and Mark sailed up to the southern shore of Asia Minor and landed at Perga in Pamphylia. Here John Mark, finding the journey too hard, perhaps, left Barnabas and Paul—to Paul's displeasure—and went back to Jerusalem. The other two went up through Pisidia and came to a city named Antioch, like the Antioch in Syria which they had left. Here Paul preached and made many converts among the Gentiles.

Chapter XI—THE CRIPPLE AT LYSTRA

NEXT Paul and Barnabas journeyed to the city of Iconium. Here they preached in the synagogue and large numbers of Gentiles came into the church, whereupon the orthodox Jews, roused to jealousy, stirred the people against the two strangers, until the city was about equally divided between those who wished to hear Paul and Barnabas and those who wished to drive them away. Finally when Paul discovered that their enemies meant to stone them, he and Barnabas left Iconium and came to Lystra, another city of Lycaonia.

In Lystra Paul not only preached the gospel but proved its power. There was

in the city a cripple who never had walked and who listened eagerly to what Paul and Barnabas had to tell of the new religion which destroyed sin and healed sickness in the name of the Christ. Paul saw this man and knew that he could be healed.

"Stand upright on thy feet," he said to the lame man.

With quick, responsive faith, the man came to his feet and stood and ran and leaped, praising God for his wonderful cure.

The people in the city, astounded by the miracle, decided at once that the Roman gods had come to earth. Barnabas, the more imposing of the two, they called Jupiter, and Paul, who was the chief speaker, they called Mercury. The priests of Jupiter prepared sacrifices and wove garlands, which they brought to the city gates to do honor to the strangers.

Paul and Barnabas, shocked at such homage, rent their clothes and ran in among the crowd.

"Sirs," they cried out, "why do ye these things? We are also men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are therein."

The people could scarcely be restrained from their worship, but Paul finally persuaded them. While they were still listening to him there came from Iconium some of the men who hated the new religion, and here in Lystra they stirred up such resentment against the disciples that the people who had been ready to worship Paul stoned him and left him for dead outside the city gates.

But Paul did not die. As his friends stood weeping around him, he arose and with Barnabas went on to Derbe, a third Lycaonian city. They established a church there, and then went back through Lystra and Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia, ordaining elders in each church and exhorting them to hold to the faith through every trial.

From Antioch in Pisidia Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps through Pamphylia and sailed once more for Antioch in Syria, whence they had started.

Chapter XII—THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

IT was now fourteen years since Paul had been converted on the Damascus road. In that time the churches of both Jews and Gentiles had grown greatly in numbers. But as the first wonder and ardor of the new members passed, differences in character and education began to afford chances for dispute and misunderstanding. It was not easy for those orthodox Jews who had become orthodox Christians to see the Gentile converts admitted to the church without being obliged to submit to Jewish rites.

Some of these men from Jerusalem came to Antioch and preached there the doctrine that unless all the Gentiles became Jews they could not be saved. At once argument and contention sprang up, for Paul and Barnabas had never tried to make the members of their church Jews before they were Christians. The discussion became so bitter at last that Paul and Barnabas went up to the mother church at Jerusalem to have the question settled.

To debate the matter, a council was called, at which James the Just presided. There was a good deal of arguing back and forth until Peter arose, and then every one kept silence to hear what the great apostle would say. His speech was short and to the point.

"Men and brethren," he said, "ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the words of the gospel and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

Every one knew that God had sent Peter to Cornelius to welcome the Gentiles into the church, and his words carried conviction. Then Paul and Barnabas told of their work among the Gentiles, and of the churches they had founded in Antioch and Lystra and Iconium, and every one listened eagerly.

When they had finished there was silence, for the dispute seemed to be forgotten. James rose and summed up what Peter and Paul had said, then quoted the prophets to prove that not to the Jews only was the gospel to be preached, and ended with the decision that if the Gentile members lived righteous lives, abstained

from their old heathen practices, and satisfied the Jews by observing certain prominent points in the law, they should not be obliged to follow all the customs in which the Jews had been brought up.

The council accepted James' wise decision, and two of the Jerusalem church, Silas and another, were sent with Paul and Barnabas with a letter to Antioch forbidding any one to trouble the new Christians with Jewish doctrines. The letter was read to the Antioch church and received with great joy. One of the messengers went back to Jerusalem, but Silas stayed in Antioch.

Although the church council had thus settled that the Gentiles should not be despised because they were not Jews, it was hard to make the Jewish Christians carry out the edict. They still in their hearts thought themselves better than the Gentiles and drew away from visiting them and eating with them. Paul and Barnabas made no difference between them, and when Peter came to Antioch he too mixed with the Gentiles.

Then some of the rigid party came from Jerusalem, and they were filled with horror that Peter, the apostle to the Jews, should mingle so freely with Gentiles. Susceptible Peter, suddenly afraid that his reputation with the orthodox might suffer, withdrew from those he had before visited. Furthermore, his example had its effect on Barnabas.

Paul, when he saw what had happened, went to Peter and Barnabas openly, withstanding them to their face, for he thought they were to be blamed because, really believing that the council was right, they had allowed outside suggestion to move them from their steadfastness.

It is good to know that Peter, instead of resenting Paul's accusation, saw his fault and repented it. In one of his letters written long after, Peter speaks of Paul as his beloved brother, so we are sure that their friendship was not broken.

Chapter XIII—PAUL AT PHILIPPI

SOME time later Paul proposed a second missionary journey.

"Let us," he said to Barnabas, "go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."

Barnabas agreed to the journey but wanted to take with them again his nephew John Mark, while Paul thought it unwise to take a man they were not sure they could rely on. So sharp was the discussion between them that

finally they separated, Barnabas and Mark sailing to Cyprus, and Paul with Silas, the messenger from Jerusalem, going up through Syria into Cilicia, the province where Paul had been born. From Tarsus he went into Lycaonia to visit Derbe and Lystra, and at Lystra found a young Greek named Timothy, who became to him as a son. Timothy's mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, were Jews, though his father was a Greek.

With Timothy in their company, Paul and Silas went through Lycaonia to Phrygia, and from Phrygia to Galatia, and on to Troas in Mysia on the Ægean Sea.

Thus they had traveled through the greater part of Asia Minor bearing the gospel; but so far the truth had not been carried across the sea into any foreign country. Now while they were at Troas, opposite the Macedonian coast, Paul saw in a vision a man from Macedonia standing beside him and praying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

Paul did not wait for a second summons. With Silas, Timothy and Luke—the writer of The Acts and of the Book of Luke—Paul took passage from Troas, touched at the island of Samothrace, and landed finally in Neapolis of Macedonia. From Neapolis Paul went to Philippi, where Mark Antony and Octavius had in the world-famous battle overthrown Brutus and Cassius and turned the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire.

Paul had been born a Jew, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He was also a Roman citizen, as Tarsus was a free city; and more than this, as Tarsus was a center of Greek culture, Paul had been educated in all the learning of the times. Yet since he had become a Christian he counted none of these advantages of any value in comparison with the religion he had found. He had preached Christianity to the Jews and would later preach it to Rome. Now he was bringing into Greece the simple truth of the gospel.

Paul and Silas stayed some days in Philippi, and as there were not enough Jews in the city to have a synagogue there, on the Sabbath Paul and his friends went down to the river bank where the few Jews, mostly women, met for prayer. There Paul spoke while his audience listened eagerly. Among the congregation was a woman named Lydia from Thyatira, who sold in Philippi the purple dye for which her city was famous. She received Paul's words as a message from heaven and was baptized.

"If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord," she begged of Paul, "come into my house and abide there." So while they were in Philippi Paul and Silas, Luke and Timothy lived at the house of the woman of Thyatira.

There was in Philippi, too, a girl who earned her living by soothsaying. This

"'I COMMAND THEE,' HE SAID TO THE FALSE SPIRIT WHICH POSSESSED THE GIRL, 'IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST TO COME OUT OF HER'"

girl worked under masters who had grown rich by her arts, but she herself was ready for better things. Whenever she saw Paul and his friends she followed them through the streets crying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation."

For several days she did this, and finally Paul spoke to her. "I command thee," he said to the false spirit of prophecy which possessed the girl, "in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."

From that hour the girl was healed, and in consequence she was useless to the men who had used her powers to make themselves rich. Furious at her cure, they caught Paul and Silas and haled them before the chief magistrates in the market place with their accusation.

"These men," they said, "being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans."

Without a trial the magistrates ordered Paul and Silas to be beaten and then handed them over to the jailor, who put them in the inner prison and set their feet fast in the stocks. For some reason Paul did not demand the trial of a Roman citizen.

We might think that men beaten, cast into a dark, damp cell, with their legs thrust through stocks, would be unhappy, but Paul and Silas, upheld by God's love and power, as Abraham and Moses and David and Daniel had been in their time, knew neither fear nor complaint. They spent the night praying to God and singing praises to Him. As they sang, at midnight the prison door shook with an earthquake, and in the cataclysm the doors were opened and the bonds of the prisoners were broken.

The jailor, who had been asleep, awoke at the commotion and seeing every door flung wide open thought that the prisoners had escaped. He knew that his life would pay for it if they were gone, so he drew his sword to kill himself.

"Do thyself no harm," Paul cried out in a loud voice. "We are all here."

"Bring a light," commanded the jailor, and trembling sprang into the cell. When he saw Paul and Silas standing composed and cheerful before him the jailor became a convert. He went down on his knees before the two men and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," Paul answered, "and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

The jailor, humble and convinced, took the prisoners to his own house, washed their wounds, fed them, and then listened with open heart to Paul's preaching.

When the apostle had finished, the jailor and all his family were baptized and with joy praised God for their new knowledge.

The opening of the prison had terrified too the magistrates who had imprisoned Paul. If the Christians' God could deliver them from prison, it would be better for the people of Philippi to let the prisoners go, so the magistrates sent the sergeants to the jailor.

"Let those men go," they said.

The jailor took the message to Paul. "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace."

"They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans," Paul answered, "and have cast us in prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out."

The word went back to the magistrates, and they trembled when they heard that they had punished a Roman citizen without a trial. Humbly they came to Paul, set him free, and begged him to leave Philippi.

Paul agreed to this. He went back to Lydia's house to see once more the new disciples and then, with Silas and Timothy, Paul left Philippi and the faithful church he had established there.

Chapter XIV—PAUL AT ATHENS

PAUL and Silas with Timothy went from Philippi to Thessalonica, where a man named Jason received them. There was a synagogue in Thessalonica, and according to his custom Paul attended it on the Sabbath and preached to all who crowded to hear him.

"This Jesus whom I preach unto you is the Christ," he declared.

Here, as in Philippi, the women believed Paul's words, and some of the Jews, and many of the Greeks. When the rulers of the synagogue found out what a following Paul was getting, their wrath burst forth, and with a mob of the rougher men of the city they assaulted Jason's house.

The disciples were not in the house at that moment, so the mob seized Jason himself and some of his friends and dragged them before the Roman magistrates.

"Those men that have turned the world upside down," they cried, "are come hither also; whom Jason hath received; and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus."

The charge of any disloyalty to Cæsar was always a disturbing thing to Roman officials, but Paul was not to be found, and Jason was a good citizen, not

to be convicted without more evidence. They bound him over, therefore, to keep the peace and dismissed him.

Jason found Paul, and that very night the disciples at Thessalonica sent Paul and Silas and Timothy secretly out of the city down to Berea.

In Berea too Paul spoke in the synagogue, and the men there, being of a nobler sort than in Thessalonica, listened readily to his preaching. He would have been safe in Berea if the malicious Jews of Thessalonica had not followed him down to Berea and raised against him in that city too a tumult that drove him out. The disciples hurried Paul to the seacoast, where he took ship for Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy in Berea to follow him later.

The time of waiting at Athens, the center of Greek learning, would once have been to Paul the greatest wonder that could happen to him. But now, as he wrote later to the Philippians, Paul counted his Jewish birth, his Roman citizenship, his Greek learning, but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He was, however, deeply interested in Athens and examined all that the city had to show. Stirred to the depths of his soul because he found in such a noble city altars everywhere to heathen gods, Paul reasoned not only in the synagogue with the Jews but in the market-place with the Greeks, both Epicureans and Stoics. They were glad to talk to him, for the volatile Athenians spent their time in telling or hearing some new thing.

"What will this babbler say?" some of the Greeks asked.

"He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods," others answered.

Finally they invited him to speak to them in assembly on Mars Hill. Paul accepted the invitation. Under the shadow of the Acropolis, with the open sky above him and the city spread below, Paul preached to the idle, curious Athenians who stood grouped in the stone court.

"As I passed by," Paul began, "and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, 'TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.' Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

Starting thus from a common standpoint and quoting the Greek poets as he went on, Paul declared that the real God is Spirit, who gives life to all, and in whom all men have their being. The Greeks listened until Paul in his discourse came finally to the life and death and resurrection of Jesus; then they began to scoff and, weary of their new amusement, broke up the assembly, some of the more courteous saying to Paul, "We will hear thee again of this matter."

But though Paul did not preach again on Mars Hill, some of the Athenians became Christians, among them a woman named Damaris, and Dionysius, one of the learned members of the assembly of Mars Hill.

Chapter XV—PAUL AT CORINTH

PAUL left Athens and went on to Corinth to wait for Silas and Timothy. Here he met two Jews, Aquila and Priscilla, who had been exiled from Rome and were carrying on in Corinth their trade of tent-making. As Paul was also a tent-maker, he joined them, and by his teaching made them both Christians. When Silas and Timothy, bringing gifts from the Macedonian churches, joined Paul a little later, they too stayed with Aquila and Priscilla.

From Corinth Paul wrote two letters to the church at Thessalonica, encouraging them to hold steadfast under persecution and to go diligently about their daily business in the name of Christ.

Paul stayed for eighteen months in Corinth, supporting himself by his trade and preaching on the Sabbath.

A Corinthian named Justus, who lived near the synagogue, gave his house to Paul, and many people gathered there to hear the apostle preach, while Sosthenes, the new ruler of the synagogue, grew more disturbed each day as he saw the numbers increase at the meetings held in Justus' house.

Though Sosthenes did all he could to disturb Paul, Paul, strengthened by a vision, had no fear, for he had heard the voice of God saying, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city."

At last a new Roman governor named Gallio was sent to Achaia, and Sosthenes, thinking it a good time to bring trouble on the Christians, seized Paul and brought him before Gallio in the midst of a howling mob composed of Jews who wanted to kill Paul and Greeks who wanted to save him.

"This fellow," cried the Jews to Gallio on his judgment seat, "persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law."

Paul opened his mouth to defend himself, but Gallio silenced him and turned to the turbulent throng of Jews, for whom he had no love.

"If it were a matter of wrong, O ye Jews," he said, "reason would that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters," and he drove the mob out from his presence.

Paul was free, but Sosthenes suffered for his malignant act. As the jostling crowd left the judgment seat the Greeks jeered first at the discomfited Jews and

then, going further, seized Sosthenes and beat him under the very eyes of Gallio, who was too indifferent to interfere.

After this, as long as Paul stayed in Corinth, he was free to preach undisturbed. When Aquila and Priscilla left the city for Ephesus, Paul went with them to have their company as far as they went and then to go on to Jerusalem to one of the great church feasts.

Chapter XVI—PAUL AT EPHESUS

PAUL stopped a day at Ephesus and then went on to Jerusalem. While he was gone a disciple of John the Baptist came to Ephesus. His name was Apollos; he was a learned Bible student and a most eloquent speaker, so the Jews delighted to listen to him. But Apollos had for some reason heard nothing of the Christ until Aquila and Priscilla told him that the Messiah whom John the Baptist had foretold had lived and died and risen again to prove the truth of the prophet's words.

Apollos listened eagerly to the preaching of Aquila, and begged to be allowed to pass over into Achaia with the gospel. The Ephesus church gave him letters to the Greek churches, and Apollos went over to Corinth and became soon a great leader in the church there.

After Apollos had left, Paul came back to Ephesus and stayed again perhaps with Aquila and Priscilla. Timothy joined Paul here, but Silas seems to have gone in another direction, for we hear of him no more as Paul's companion. Paul was two years at Ephesus, preaching and healing the sick in the name of Christ. He preached at first in the synagogue, but when the Jews would no longer allow him there, he gathered his followers in the house of an Ephesian named Tyrannus.

In Ephesus, as in so many other cities, there were soothsayers trying to prophesy and do miracles by their own power, and they were very curious to find out by what power the apostles did their healing. Hearing the apostles speak in the name of Christ, they supposed there was some magic in the word itself, and one soothsayer, Sceva, with his seven sons, tried to heal an insane man by using the charm.

"We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth," they said.

"Jesus I know, and Paul I know," answered the evil spirit, "but who are you?" In his frenzy the insane man leaped on Sceva and his sons, tore off their clothes, and wounded them before they could escape from his grasp.

This failure of Sceva had a great effect in Ephesus. Many other sorcerers came to Paul to confess their sins, burn their books, and give their gains to the church.

While Paul was thus making converts in Ephesus, Apollos was doing the same thing in Corinth, and before long a jealousy sprang up in the Corinthian church between those whom Paul had converted and those whom Apollos had converted. The news of this division came to Paul at Ephesus, and was one of the reasons for the letter which he now wrote to the Corinthians.

"It hath been declared unto me," Paul wrote, "that there are contentions among you. Every one of you saith, 'I am of Paul'; 'I of Apollos'; 'I of Christ.' Is Christ divided? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So that neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

It is interesting to see that in this letter to Corinth Paul chooses some of his figures of speech from the races in the Isthmian Games, which he must have seen in Corinth. In this letter too is the wonderful description of love which Paul describes as no one else has ever been able to do. And further on still comes Paul's description of the resurrection of Jesus which "brought to pass the saying, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" There have not been many letters written as wonderful as that letter of Paul's to the Corinthian church.

Paul, when he had written his letter, sent it to Corinth but he himself stayed on at Ephesus, hoping that when Titus on his collecting tour should come that way, he would bring an answer from Corinth.

Paul's preaching in the meantime roused hatred among the Jews and some suspicion too among the Greeks, for in Ephesus was the temple that held the statue of the Greek goddess Diana, which the Greeks thought fell from heaven, and one of the chief industries of the city was the making of little silver images of Diana. The silversmiths of Ephesus therefore did not like Paul's preaching of a God who is Spirit.

When spring came Paul wanted to go again through Macedonia and Achaia and then to Jerusalem.

"After I have been there," he said, "I must also see Rome."

But for the present he stayed in Ephesus and sent Timothy to Macedonia.

May was the month of Diana, and as the time of the great festival in her honor arrived, Ephesus was thronged with people. It was among this crowd that the silversmiths sold their images of Diana; but this year, owing to Paul's teachings, there were some Ephesians who did not buy. Demetrius, the chief silversmith, quick to discover the fact, at once called all the silver workers together.

"Sirs," he addressed the assembly, "ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover, ye see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that there be no gods which are made with hands. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipeth."

It is easy to stir the anger of a crowd. The whole assembly of silversmiths at the thought of an insult to their goddess rushed into the streets crying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

The crowd outside caught up the cry without knowing what had first raised it, and the city rang with it. The silversmiths rushed to seize Paul, but the Asiarchs, or rulers of the festival, were Paul's friends, and he was kept in safety. The mob found two of Paul's followers, however, Gaius and Aristarchus—and dragged them into the theater. When Paul heard that the two were in the power of the crazy throng he wanted to go at once to their help, but the Asiarchs knew that showing Paul to the mob would be like throwing oil on a fire, and they would not let him go.

In the theater the mob surged this way and that, shouting some one thing and some another, for very few of them knew why they were there at all, but in spite of it all Gaius and Aristarchus were not hurt.

The Jews, wishing not to be counted in among the Christians, put Alexander, one of their number, forward to speak, but the mob, when they found out that he was a Jew, hustled him out of his place and broke out once more in the wild cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" For two hours they shrieked and pushed and swayed, until they wore themselves out, and the town-crier, who had been trying all that time to get their attention, finally made himself heard.

"Ye men of Ephesus," he cried, "what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshiper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of the churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Wherefore if Demetrius and the craftsmen which are with him have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another. But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we can give an account of this concourse."

The last remark sobered the throng. It was true that Rome had as little patience with riots in Ephesus as in Jerusalem, and punished them with a high hand. Quiet and exhausted, the people crept away to their homes, not anxious to be identified as one of the disorderly mob. Gaius and Aristarchus returned gratefully to Paul.

Chapter XVII—PAUL IN JERUSALEM

AQUILA and Priscilla went back to Rome apparently soon after the riot in Ephesus. Paul had been waiting for Titus to bring him news of the church in Corinth, but as he did not come, Paul bade good-by to the disciples at Ephesus and crossed the Ægean to Macedonia. At Philippi he met Titus and welcomed him gladly, for not only did he love Titus as he loved Timothy, but Titus told him that the Corinthians had read Paul's letter with love and were trying to obey it. Paul wrote at Philippi a second letter to Corinth and sent it back by Titus, whose chief business seemed to be to gather in Macedonia the funds which the Macedonians were so eager to contribute to help the poor in Judea.

After a while Paul followed his letter to Corinth and stayed there three months. He heard in Corinth that the church in Galatia was more or less under the control of the strictly Jewish Christians, and that the whole church was upset on that account. Paul wrote at once a letter to the Galatians telling them of the decision of the Jerusalem council years before as to the foolishness of making Gentile Christians conform to all the Jewish practices, and rebuking the Galatians for being influenced by false teaching.

From Corinth too Paul wrote a letter to Rome in which he explained at great length the doctrine of Christian law as opposed to the older Mosaic law. It was a subject that would appeal to the law-making Romans. This letter he sent by a woman named Phœbe, and in it he sends his love to Aquila and Priscilla.

After his three months at Corinth Paul went back to Philippi, where Luke joined him again. Aristarchus and Gaius and Timothy and some others were sent ahead to wait at Troas, and after the Passover Paul and Luke also recrossed the Ægean and came to Troas, where they stayed a week.

Up to this time we have read of the apostles keeping the Jewish Sabbath in the synagogue, but in Troas it was on Sunday, the first day of the week, commemorating the resurrection of Jesus, that the disciples gathered together while Paul

preached. There were many people in the upper chamber and the numerous lights made it very warm. In an open window sat a young man named Eutychus who, overcome finally by sleep, fell from the window and was taken up dead. Paul, however, went down and embraced him.

"Trouble not yourselves," he said, "for his life is in him," and as by the power of God Elisha had raised the Shunemite's son and Peter had revived Dorcas, Paul restored Eutychus and brought him back to the upper chamber to break bread and finish the evening's conversation.

The next day Paul walked from Troas to Assos, desiring doubtless to be alone for quiet thought and prayer. The others by boat picked him up at Assos, and together they landed at Miletus, not far from Ephesus. Paul wanted to see the Ephesian disciples once more before he went to Jerusalem, but if he traveled by land and stopped at Ephesus it would make him too late at Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost.

The elders of the church came gladly from Ephesus to Miletus to hear Paul's words, and he spoke them solemnly, for he knew that they were probably the last he should speak to these disciples.

"Behold," he said, "I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Then he went on to warn them to stand firm after he should leave them, and let no jealousy or quarrel spring up among them. When he had finished, he kneeled down and prayed with them, and then the disciples, weeping to think they should not see him again, accompanied him to the ship and bade him farewell.

From Miletus Paul and his party sailed to Phœnicia, landing at Tyre, where they stayed a week with the Christians of that city. When Paul took ship again the disciples followed him, and once more they held a prayer-meeting on the seashore. Then Paul went on to Ptolemais, and from there to Cæsarea, where Philip the deacon entertained him.

While Paul was in Philip's house the prophet Agabus came in. Solemnly he took Paul's girdle and with it bound his own hands and feet.

"Thus saith the Holy Spirit," he said, " 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' "

When Luke and Timothy and the others heard this, they begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem; but Paul silenced them.

"What mean ye to weep," he asked, "and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

"The will of the Lord be done," they answered, seeing that Paul was not to be dissuaded.

From Cæsarea, therefore, Paul and his friends went straight to Jerusalem, where James and the council received him gladly, and listened eagerly to the story of what God had done for the Gentiles. When Paul had finished the council spoke rather sadly.

"Thou seest, brother," they said, "how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law; and they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying they ought not to walk after the customs. What shall we do therefore? The multitude must needs come together; for they will hear that thou art come."

It was a question that must be debated. James had done wonderfully with this Jerusalem church, made up of the strictest Jews, who were jealous of their position as the first church and who clung tenaciously to all Jewish practices. He had on the one hand insisted that the Gentiles should conform to those customs dearest to Jewish hearts, and on the other hand had forbidden the Jews to exact from the Gentiles observance of the whole law. But in spite of this, the Jews did not love the Gentiles, and the Jerusalem church looked with distrust on Paul, a native of Tarsus and a preacher to the Gentiles. The sight of him in Jerusalem might readily rouse a disturbance.

Then the council told Paul what they wanted him to do to convince the people that he did not despise the Jewish law. There were in Jerusalem four men who had taken the Nazarite vow; within a week it would be time for them to cut their hair, be purified by the priests, and go back to their usual life. If Paul would take these men to the temple when their vows ended and pay the cost of their purifying, he would convince the church of his adherence to the law.

Paul agreed to this public announcement of his Jewish orthodoxy, and went the next day to the temple with the Nazarites. This duty done, he went about his own business until the week should be over.

Chapter XVIII—THE RIOT IN THE TEMPLE

THERE was in Jerusalem at the time of Paul's visit a friend of his, Trophimus, an Ephesian, with whom Paul was seen more than once. One person saw Paul with Trophimus in the street, another saw him with the four Nazarites in the temple, and from these two encounters probably grew the report that Paul had taken a Greek beyond the Court of the Gentiles through the Beautiful Gate into the next court where no Gentile was allowed to go. It happened one day when Paul was in the temple that he met certain Jews from a synagogue in Asia Minor who had done their best at home to crush him and his teachings. When they met him now face to face in Jerusalem their hatred boiled up afresh.

"Men of Israel, help!" they cried, seizing Paul. "This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and the law and this place; and further brought Greeks into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place."

The Pharasiac Christians were only too glad to have any seeming proof of Paul's disloyalty to Judaism, and it took little at any time to stir up a tumult in Jerusalem. At once the court was filled with a pushing, shouting mob, who dragged Paul out of the Court of the Women, through the Beautiful Gate, into the Court of the Gentiles. The keepers clanged the brass gate behind the mob and left Paul at its mercy in the outer court.

In the northwest corner of the temple area, overlooking all the temple courts, rose the tall tower built by the Maccabees, rebuilt by Herod the Great, and called by him the Tower of Antonia, after Mark Antony. There was in the tower always a strong Roman guard in barracks, ready at any moment to run down the staircase into the outer temple court to quell the many disturbances which were always rising. As soon now as the noise of the tumult reached the ears of Claudius Lysias, the commander of the guard, he issued a sharp command for a company of soldiers and at their head dashed down the stairs into the Court of the Gentiles and rescued Paul from the hands of his assailants. He put handcuffs on Paul, chaining him to a soldier on each side of him, and then turning to the throng of frantic people he demanded the cause of the trouble.

No one told him; some cried one thing and some another, but there was no reason in the incoherent roar as the crowd pressed forward to seize Paul again. Lysias ordered the prisoner to be carried into the tower.

When the mob saw their prey escaping they made a mad rush forward, and the movement carried Paul halfway up the stairs. The soldiers stopped the rush, and the throng gave way slowly, crying as they fell back, "Away with him! Away with him!"

Because of the tremendous uproar Claudius Lysias supposed that he had some great criminal in his charge, perhaps even the famous Egyptian who two or three years before had tried to overthrow Jerusalem; his army had been scattered by Felix, but the leader himself had escaped.

"May I speak unto thee?" Paul asked in Greek.

"Canst thou speak Greek?" asked Lysias. "Art not thou that Egyptian which before these days madest an uproar and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?"

"I am a Jew of Tarsus," Paul answered, "a citizen of no mean city; and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people."

Something in Paul's dignity and composure impressed the captain of the guard and he gave Paul leave to speak to the throng below. Paul, standing on the stairs, turned and when he held up his hand a great silence fell on the angry mob. In the Hebrew tongue Paul spoke.

"Men, brethren and fathers," he said, "hear ye my defense which I make now unto you. I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."

When the people heard that Paul spoke in Hebrew they listened as he went on to tell them of his early zeal against the Christians; of his journey to Damascus and his conversion, until he spoke of his office as preacher to the Gentiles. At the sound of that hated name their frenzy broke forth again. They tore their own garments and threw dust into the air.

"Away with such a fellow from the earth," they shrieked, "for it is not fit that he should live!"

Sorry that he had allowed a speech which had again inflamed the mob, Lysias led his prisoner into the tower and delivered him to a centurion with the order that he should be scourged. Lysias went back to his own apartment.

As the soldiers bound Paul, the apostle spoke quietly to the centurion who stood by.

"Is it lawful," he asked, "for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

The centurion went at once to Lysias. "Take heed," he said, "what thou doest; for this man is a Roman."

Quickly Claudius Lysias went back to Paul. "Tell me," he demanded, "art thou a Roman?"

"Yea," answered Paul.

"With a great sum obtained I this freedom," said Lysias.

"But I was free-born," Paul responded

Troubled, Lysias ordered Paul's thongs cut, and sent away the soldiers that were to have scourged him. Then he left Paul under guard and went back to his own apartment to wonder uneasily what he could do with this Roman Jew, whom the Jews were determined to kill, but in whom he could find nothing worthy of punishment.

Chapter XIX—PAUL BEFORE FELIX

S soon as the Sanhedrin was assembled in the morning, Lysias sent his prisoner down, hoping that the council would form a charge that he could consider. But, as in the time of Jesus, Pharisees and Sadducees united now in their desire to kill Paul rather than to judge. Paul saw that as soon as he came into the council.

"Men and brethren," he said suddenly, turning to the Pharisees, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."

Immediately great clamor rose in the council hall, for Paul's statement had turned the trial into a party quarrel and made, for the time, the Pharisees his friends.

"We find no evil in this man," they cried, "but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God."

The sudden friendliness of the Pharisees for Paul roused all the bitterness of the Sadducees. In the tumult that followed, Paul would have been torn to pieces between the two parties if Lysias had not once more rescued him and carried him back for protection to the Tower of Antonia.

That night forty Jews came to the Sanhedrin. "We will eat nothing," they said, "till we have slain Paul. Tell the chief captain to bring Paul again before you to-morrow, and before he reaches the council chamber we will kill him."

The Sanhedrin gladly agreed to this treacherous plan, but word of it came in some way to Paul's nephew, who carried the news at once to Lysias.

"Tell no man that thou hast showed me these things," Lysias said to the young man as he sent him away.

Then Lysias called two centurions and ordered a guard to be made ready at once to escort Paul to Felix, the Roman governor at Cæsarea. While they made ready, Lysias wrote a letter to Felix explaining the case, and long before dawn Paul, under guard, was on his way to Cæsarea.

At Cæsarea Paul was put into Felix's care, and five days after the deputies from the Sanhedrin arrived to make their accusations. They were the usual statements that Paul stirred up trouble among both Jews and Gentiles. Paul denied the charges.

As Felix could find nothing definite to say about the case, he postponed it until Lysias should come to tell him more about it. In the meantime Paul, chained to a soldier, was allowed to go about and to see his friends. More than once he talked to Felix and his wife Drusilla about the church, urging them to leave their wickedness and live righteously and in the fear of God, until he stirred Felix's careless, corrupt, pleasure-loving soul to uneasiness.

"Go thy way for this time," Felix said finally. "When I have a more convenient season I will call for thee."

Felix liked his prisoner, and if Paul at any time through the next two years had offered the governor a bribe large enough, he would have set Paul free. But Paul offered no bribe, and after two years Felix was deposed and went out of office, leaving Paul a prisoner to be dealt with by Festus, the new governor.

Chapter XX—PAUL BEFORE FESTUS

ESTUS, when he became governor, went up to Jerusalem, and the Sanhedrin at once asked that Paul should be sent to them at Jerusalem, but Festus denied the demand. The Sanhedrin therefore were forced once more to send accusers to Cæsarea.

Festus was a better man than Felix but he, like every other Roman governor of Judea, made it his policy to pacify the Jews if he could. He listened to the accusations, and to Paul's reply, and the most that he could make out of it was that the Sanhedrin were determined to try Paul in Jerusalem.

"Wilt thou," he asked Paul, "go up to Jerusalem to be judged of these things before me?"

Paul knew what mercy he might expect as a Jew in Jerusalem. "To the Jews I have done no wrong," he said steadily to Festus, "as thou very well knowest. I appeal unto Cæsar."

Chapter XXI—PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

AST thou appealed unto Cæsar?" Festus exclaimed. "Unto Cæsar thou shalt go."

While Festus waited for a convoy to send Paul to Nero at Rome, Herod Agrippa II came to Cæsarea, and when he had heard Paul's story wanted to see him. So while Festus and Agrippa sat in great pomp, Paul was brought before them. Festus told Paul's story.

"Thou art permitted to speak for thyself," Agrippa said to Paul.

Once more Paul told how, born a Pharisee, he had persecuted the Nazarenes until the vision on the Damascus road had made him a Christian. "Whereupon, O King Agrippa," Paul said simply, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. But showed unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem and to the Gentiles that Christ should suffer and that he should rise from the dead."

"Paul," interrupted Festus in a loud voice, "much learning doth make thee mad."

"I am not mad, most noble Festus," Paul answered. "This thing was not done in a corner. The king knoweth of these things." Paul turned suddenly to Agrippa. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," Agrippa answered, and whether he spoke in mockery or sad earnest, Paul answered him earnestly.

"I would to God," the apostle said, "that not only thou but all these that hear me were both almost and altogether such as I am—except these bonds."

"This man," Agrippa said, "might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar."

Chapter XXII—THE SHIPWRECK

AUL was put in charge of Julius, a centurion, who was taking other prisoners to Rome on a ship of Adramythium. Luke was with Paul, and Aristarchus who had suffered at Ephesus.

The first stop was at Sidon in Phœnicia, and here Paul was allowed to go ashore and visit the disciples of that city, for Julius was already his friend.

When they loosed at Sidon they struck a contrary wind and instead of laying

"THE SWIMMERS WENT FIRST AND AFTER THEM CAME THE OTHERS FLOATING ON BOARDS. IN THIS WAY ALL ESCAPED"

their course across the Mediterranean to Asia Minor they ran north along the shore and found comparatively sheltered water between Cyprus and the mainland until the ship stopped at Myra in Lycia.

At Myra lay an Alexandrian corn ship bound for Italy, and Julius transferred his prisoner to this vessel. From that time they knew nothing but trouble.

Keeping close to the shore the ship sailed north of Rhodes with so little wind that after a slow progress of many days they had gone only as far as the Peninsula of Cnidus. From Cnidus they dropped south again, rounded the western point of Crete, Cape Salmone, and anchored in The Fair Havens, the harbor of Lasea.

It was fall by this time, for the Day of Atonement was past, and the winter storms might at any time set in to make sailing dangerous.

"Sirs," Paul said to the centurion and the ship captain, "I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives."

The centurion turned to the captain, but he scorned Paul's advice. Phenice, a little farther on, had a better harbor than Fair Havens and that in the captain's opinion was the place to winter. The centurion yielded, and when after a few days a soft south breeze sprang up, the captain weighed anchor and, sailing close in shore, laid his course for Phenice.

But scarcely had he left the harbor when a northeasterly gale—the Euroclydon or "wave-stirring easter"—struck the ship with a fury that whirled her away from the control of her rudder and drove her far out of her course. As she scudded before the gale, she came after a while under the lee of the island of Claudia, and in this short time of a smoother sea the captain hoisted aboard the boat that had been towing behind, and passed ropes under the keel of the ship, fastening them on deck, to bind the vessel more tightly together and prevent her springing a leak. Then bringing her head up into the wind, he furled sail and lay to, to weather out the gale.

But the northeaster, instead of falling, raged the harder, and the ship was driven steadily westward. The next day the captain lightened her by throwing overboard everything that he could do without, and on the third day sailors and passengers united in tossing into the sea all spare tackle. But the ship, helpless in the gale, drifted day after day through the raging sea, while the clouds hid sun and stars, the sailors' guides. In the toil and excitement no one took time to eat; and finally after two weeks of storm every one gave up the thought of being saved. Then in despair Paul spoke.

"Sirs," he said, "ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of

good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, saying, 'Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.' Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must cast upon a certain island."

Then a night came when the man on watch heard surf breaking on shore, and a new fear assailed them; they had escaped foundering at sea only to go to pieces on the rocks. They cast the lead and found twenty fathoms of water. The next sounding showed fifteen fathoms. Full of apprehension the captain dropped four anchors out of the stern and waited for the day.

The sailors gathered together in the dark to murmur and grumble. There was only one boat, which was much too small to save soldiers and prisoners and sailors. But it would hold the sailors. Why not drop it over into the sea on some pretext and then escape in it? They went to the captain therefore with the proposal that the boat should carry anchors forward to hold the ship by the bow, and the captain agreed.

Paul, as he watched the sailors swing the boat out on the davits, knew that they meant to escape and leave the ship to its fate.

"Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved," he said to the centurion standing by.

Then the centurion saw in a flash the sailors' treachery. In obedience to his quick order, the soldiers cut the ropes by which the boat hung, and it dropped down empty into the sea and disappeared in the darkness, while the sailors, ashamed, slunk back to their quarters.

Before the day began to dawn, Paul spoke again to all the two hundred and seventy-six men on board.

"This day," he said, "is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat; for this is for your health; for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you."

Comforted, the soldiers and sailors and prisoners gathered to the first calm meal of a fortnight. Paul, standing in their midst, after he had thanked God for His care, began quietly to eat, and all those about him followed his example.

Cheered by their meal the sailors opened up the hold of the sinking ship and threw overboard all the cargo of wheat, which doubtless by this time was soaked with salt water. Thus lightened, the vessel would again obey her rudder.

The dawning day found every one gazing eagerly at the shore. No one rec-

ognized the island, but the captain soon saw a creek whose mouth as it ran into the sea made a possible landing-place. The anchors were weighed, the rudder bands unloosed, the mainsail raised, and as it filled the vessel moved toward shore.

Before it was beached, however, in the chosen spot, it struck a counter current, and the captain ran his ship aground as best he might. The bow stuck fast, but the stern was battered by the pounding surf.

The Roman soldiers, seeing that the vessel was breaking up and that there would be no orderly landing, wanted to kill the prisoners for whom they were responsible, to prevent any of them from escaping, but Julius' friendship for Paul saved them all.

"Let all that can swim," the centurion ordered, "cast themselves first into the sea and get to land."

So the swimmers went first and after them came the others floating on boards and bits of the ship which was fast going to pieces. In this way all escaped. Of all the two hundred and seventy-six souls on board the vessel, not one was lost.

Chapter XXIII—PAUL IN MALTA

HEN the people of the ship were safely landed they found that they were on the island of Melita, which we call Malta. The inhabitants, whom Luke speaks of as "barbarians" because they did not speak Greek, were very kind to their unexpected guests, and at once kindled a great fire to warm and dry the cold, wet mariners.

Paul helped gather sticks for the fire, and as he threw down one bundle, out of it came a torpid viper which, warmed by the heat of the fire, fastened on Paul's hand.

The superstitious people of Malta shook their heads as they murmured together. "No doubt this man is a murderer," they said, "whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live," and they looked to see Paul's hand swell and then for Paul to die.

But the apostle, though he had not heard the last words of Jesus as he ascended, had fallen heir to their power on the Damascus road. As he had been obedient to the heavenly vision, he, like Peter and John, knew the signs that followed them that believed. "In my name," Jesus had said, "shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Calmly Paul shook the viper off into the fire and went on about his work. As time passed and no signs of hurt could be seen, the natives changed their minds, and from thinking Paul a murderer called him a god.

Instead of wintering in Crete, as they had expected, the crew and passengers of the Alexandrian corn ship wintered in Malta. Publius, the governor of the island, had received his guests with great courtesy, and did all he could to make them comfortable through the cold, wintry months.

Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, spent the time as his Master would have spent it, in doing good. Publius' father, very ill of dysentery, was healed by Paul's prayers, and when the news spread, sick people flocked from all over the island for healing, and Paul healed them all. The signs were still following them that believed.

Chapter XXIV—PAUL AT ROME

FTER three months on Malta another Alexandrian ship which had been wintering on the island resumed her voyage to Italy. She sailed under the sign of Castor and Pollux, who were the gods of seamen and were used often as figure-heads on vessels. In this vessel Julius shipped his prisoners.

They stopped at Syracuse in Sicily, touched at Regium on the toe of Italy, sailed from there with a free wind one day to Puteoli, where they stayed seven days, and from Puteoli they went on to Rome. The disciples in Rome—perhaps including Aquila and Priscilla—who had heard of Paul's coming, started eagerly along the Appian way to welcome him, and met him at The Three Taverns. Paul, embracing his fellow Christians, thanked God and took courage.

When Julius delivered his prisoner to the captain of the guard in Rome he must have told the captain of his friendship for Paul, for here in Rome too Paul was still treated with the greatest kindness. His trial could not take place until his accusers came from Jerusalem, and that apparently they were in no hurry to do; so for two years in his own hired house, although he was still chained to a Roman soldier, Paul was allowed perfect freedom, and his house was big enough to hold all those who wished to hear him preach.

True to his dearest wish of making the Jews understand the new religion, Paul as soon as possible called them together.

"Men and brethren," he said, "though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem

into the hands of the Romans. For this cause, therefore, have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you; because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

"We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee," they answered, "neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

They set a day, therefore, and Paul preached to them boldly and ardently, quoting from Moses and the prophets to prove that Jesus was the Christ who had come to open to men the kingdom of God. From morning till evening he reasoned with them, some who had the hearing ear and the seeing eye believing, while others who were deaf and blind finally went away unconvinced.

"Well spake Isaiah," cried Paul in his sorrow, "saying, 'The heart of this people is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.' Be it known unto you, therefore, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

Though he could not convince all the Jews, Paul was not wholly unhappy in Rome. Luke was with him and Aristarchus and Timothy and the very Mark who had once left him and who was now his most devoted disciple. He had a new follower too in Onesimus, a slave who had run away from his master Philemon in Colosse. Paul convinced Onesimus finally that the right thing to do was to return to his master, and when Onesimus went back Paul sent a letter to Philemon telling him to be good to his repentant Christian slave. With Onesimus went Tychicus, carrying a letter to the Colossian church and the epistle to the Ephesians.

As in his letter to Corinth Paul had chosen his figures of speech from the Corinthian games, so here in material Rome, chained to a soldier, Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians uses the terms of war.

"Take unto yourselves the whole armor of God," he says, "that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day," and goes on to recommend the girdle of truth, and the breastplate of righteousness, and the sandals of the gospel, and the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

From Rome too Paul wrote to Philippi a letter full of love and gratitude for the unswerving faith and liberality of the Philippian church.

Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts, tells us no more about Paul after these two years while he waited for his accusers from Jerusalem. But tradition says

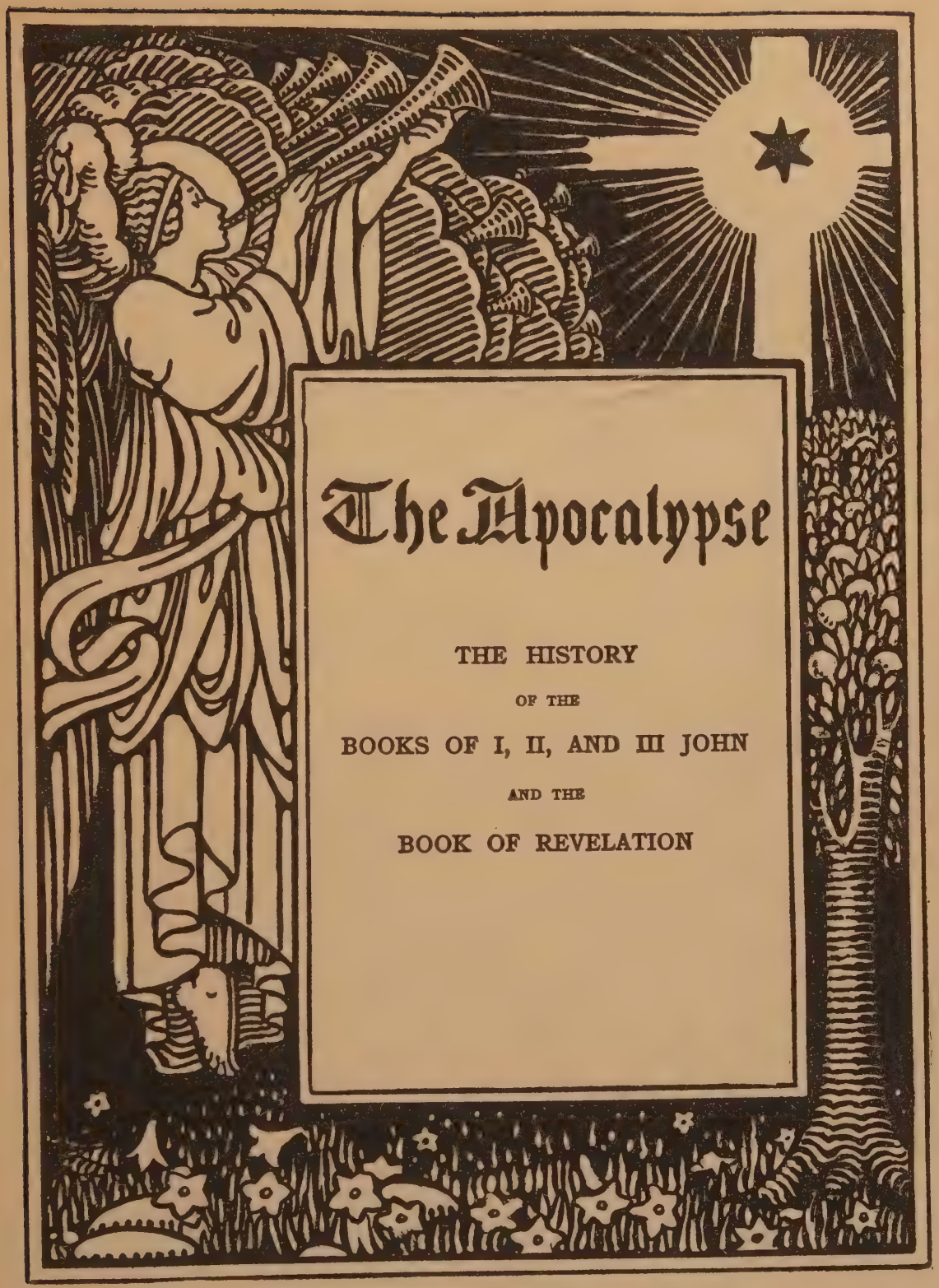
that at the end of the two years Paul was tried and acquitted; that he went to Spain, and traveled once more through Asia Minor before he was finally arrested in the end of Nero's reign and executed. As a Roman, Paul was beheaded and not crucified.

Peter and James the Just were killed probably while Paul was in prison in Rome, for Nero's persecutions swept away hundreds of Christians. John, the beloved disciple, is said to be the only one of the twelve to escape martyrdom. Peter has left us two letters, and James one, written to the church at large.

Paul from his last imprisonment at Rome wrote one letter to Titus, two to Timothy, and perhaps the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the second letter to Timothy we have our last sure word of St. Paul.

"Do thy diligence to come to me shortly," he writes Timothy. "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry. The cloak that I left at Troas when thou comest bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear.

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."



The Apocalypse

THE HISTORY

OF THE

BOOKS OF I, II, AND III JOHN

AND THE

BOOK OF REVELATION

THE APOCALYPSE

AFTER the death of James the Just it is likely that John, the beloved disciple, lived no more in Jerusalem but made his home in Ephesus, where he supervised the seven great churches of Asia Minor, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Laodicea, and Philadelphia. In Ephesus John wrote probably his Gospel, his Epistles, and later, after his return from Patmos, the Apocalypse, which we know as the Book of Revelation.

St. John's Gospel differs from those of Matthew, Mark and Luke in that it tells more fully Jesus' teachings. Matthew has kept for us many parables; Mark gives us a simple, straightforward history of Jesus' life from the day of his baptism till his ascension; Luke, the doctor, tells of Jesus' wonderful healings; and John, the thinker, repeats Jesus' words which he had treasured and pondered.

John had been the "Son of Thunder" before he became Jesus' disciple, but his close contact with his Master taught him that love is the greatest force in the universe. In his Gospel, and still more in his Epistles, John makes love his chief theme. "Let us not love in word," he says, "neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

It was on the island of Patmos, west of Ephesus, that John saw the visions he has written down in Revelation, for although he escaped the persecutions of Nero, he was banished by Domitian to Patmos and was there for some years.

In the first chapter of Genesis we read about God's perfect creation and man in God's image, who did not know sin, but there follows immediately the story of the serpent and a sinning Adam and Eve driven out of paradise. Through the whole Bible after that, from Genesis to Revelation, we find the history of God's efforts to bring man into His kingdom and of men's stubborn hold to the things of earth. Only a few men and women through long ages had the hearing ear and the seeing eye.

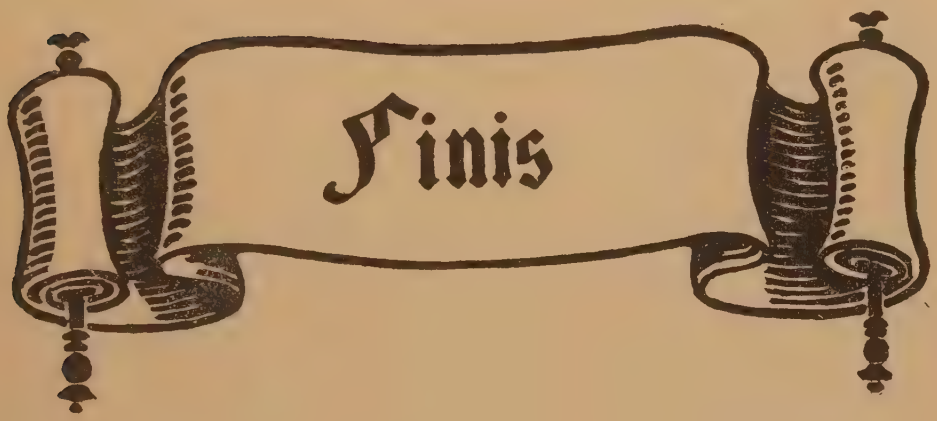
To Noah, after Adam's sin, God gave a new world with the declaration of God's protection; but Noah's descendants built the Tower of Babel, on which they tried to climb to a heaven that God had not made. God gave to Abraham His eternal covenant, and Abraham understood it, but his descendants ended as

slaves in Egypt. To Moses came the renewal of God's promise to His peculiar people, but in spite of Moses' faithfulness the children of Israel wandered forty years grumbling through the desert before they reached the promised land, and after they had established themselves in Canaan they began at once to worship idols of stone and wood. Through the long, hard years of getting firm possession of the country the voice of God came again and again to the judges, but among them all only Samuel knew that it was to righteousness God called them and not to more material power. Only Samuel too knew what they were doing when, rejecting God as their sole king, the children of Israel demanded a mortal king to rule over them. David understood God's promise, but the long line of Jewish kings led the people finally into bondage, for neither king nor people would listen to the prophets who preached the kingdom of God. After their subjugation by one foreign power after another, when finally Rome ruled the children of Israel and they were still longing for material freedom, God sent His Son to renew once more His covenant to man. But not even to the Son would men listen; they clung to earth and would not enter heaven. Only John knew, and Peter and Paul and the other disciples, that when Jesus met death and overcame it and rose from the dead he had fulfilled finally God's covenant with man and set wide open for him the kingdom of God.

It was because John knew this that he saw the vision on Patmos and wrote the Revelation. The Book begins with an exhortation to the seven great churches of Asia Minor, reproving their shortcomings and encouraging their aspiration to better things. Each exhortation ends with a promise to "him that overcometh." John knew what it meant to overcome.

After the addresses to the churches, John told his visions, vivid as those of Daniel, and finally in his last chapter John ends the Bible just where it began, with a picture of the kingdom of God. John called it the New Jerusalem, and put into it the tree of life whose leaves were for the healing of the nations, and the river of life which watered the city abundantly. God was the light of His kingdom, and all men served Him, for at last He dwelt with them, and they were His people and He their one God. There was no sorrow nor crying in the New Jerusalem, nor any pain nor death, for only righteousness dwelt there, and everything untrue was destroyed.

This declaration of the perfection and permanence of God's kingdom was the last writing of Jesus' last disciple on earth. John lived to be over ninety years old, and tradition says that when he was unable to go to church on his own feet, the disciples carried him there. His one utterance was, "Little children, love one another," and when some one asked him why he always said the same thing, John

answered, "This is what the Lord commands you, and this if ye do it, is sufficient."

And then at last after his long, faithful, loving life John died. He and his friends, the disciples of the Christ, had through the darkest hours carried the torch, lighted anew by Jesus. Through their steadfastness truth did not perish from the earth but lived to light our world to-day. The torch is in our hands now, and if we carry it as bravely and seeingly as did Abraham and Moses and David and Isaiah and John and Peter and Paul, the future ages will thank us as we thank those heroes of old.